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 on-site 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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A MESSAGE FROM THE
PRESIDENT

James G. Cibulka

Greetings, NCATE BOE members. I had the opportunity to meet some of you at this summer’s training session, and I look forward to getting to know others of you at NCATE, AACTE, and other meetings.

NCATE salutes you and all of the hard work you do to make the accreditation process operate smoothly. You are professionals who care about the quality of teachers and the capacity of teacher education programs to prepare the teachers we need. Your professional association has identified you as a committed volunteer who can hold our field to high standards.

From my vantage point as a dean, I have seen NCATE make many changes over the past seven years---first in 2001 to performance-based accreditation; then in 2004 to common program assessments and a new program review system; then in 2007 to the introduction of a new program review system based on feedback from institutions which had been through the process in 2004-2006. Many institutions had serious concerns about the viability of that process as it had been implemented.

I have reviewed the more formative, revised program review process and have seen the new program review system conducted through NCATE’s website, and I am very impressed by its accessibility and its ability to handle over 1,000 program reports a semester---and the number is growing.

NCATE has made a real effort to change the system, and I’m sure that NCATE boards this fall will continue their review and will make more changes to streamline the system to relieve institutional burden. NCATE is also streamlining its unit review system so that there is no duplication between unit and program review, again easing paperwork for institutions.

There are still issues and concerns that remain in the field. One of my first actions as president has been to commission a survey which will be sent to all institutions this fall, to gather objective data on institutional perceptions of the NCATE accreditation process. NCATE’s policy boards and staff will use that data to drive any further changes and to help set our course for the future.

One of our challenges is to assure that our accreditation process works effectively for all kinds of institutions. For example, the review of MAT programs has been particularly troublesome for many institutions. The NCATE policy boards will address the review of MAT programs this fall.

More changes are very likely. For example, institutions have told us that they want a process that they perceive as more collegial in nature. We will address that issue this year, and that will most likely involve process changes.

Finally, you are NCATE’s face, body and spirit to the institutions! Their experience of your visit is their experience of NCATE. They will carry their perceptions until the next visit—which in most cases, is seven years away. We must ensure that the visit is constructive, even if the institution has work left to do, and we must ensure that the hard work of preparing for the visit is recognized.

Again, I personally want to thank you for your commitment and dedication to NCATE accreditation. You are the heart of the NCATE process, and we value all that you do to ensure quality in the teaching profession.
STANDARDS UPDATE

National Program Review: Key Evidence for All Standards

BOE members now have access to program reports and resulting National Recognition Reports (NRRs), if the institutions they are visiting had programs reviewed using NCATE’s national program review process. The program reports and NRRs are posted in AIMS. Because the reports are available to BOE members in AIMS, institutions are no longer required to include data related to nationally reviewed programs in their Institutional Reports as they address Standard 1. Instead, for Standard 1, institutions are only expected to summarize data in their IRs for programs that were not nationally reviewed. To access the program and National Recognition Reports, BOE members should go to their AIMS workspace and click on “Programs” under “Accreditation Information” on the menu.

The reports for each program include the key assessments, scoring guides, and data used in a specific program. In the contextual section of the report the program describes the relationship of the conceptual framework to the program, the field experiences, and relationship of program assessments to the unit assessment system. The final section of the program report includes a description of how the program has used the assessment data to change and improve the program. This information should provide resources to help the team know that standards are being met.

The National Recognition Reports are written by experts in the respective fields and based on the expert review of assessments, scoring guides, and assessment data provided by the institution in program reports. The NRRs provide valuable information for BOE teams. The NRRs are divided into several parts; they include recognition decisions and information about how the programs address several elements in Standard 1.

Team members are expected to review the National Recognition Reports as primary evidence for meeting Standard 1, which requires candidates to meet national standards. If negative patterns emerge across NRRs, then BOE members should cite an area for improvement, e.g., National Recognition Reports for English, Science, Math and Social Studies indicate that the unit’s assessments are not sufficiently aligned with the program standards.

We encourage teams to read the National Recognition Reports and to review a sample of the program reports. Together, these reports include information on Standard 1 as well as information that teams will find valuable for other standards, as indicated below:

Standard 1
• The assessments, scoring, guides, and assessment data for each program indicate the degree to which candidates are meeting national standards.
• The recognition decision, which is shown on the AIMS screen, should help the team know which programs need further exploration during the on-site visit. Concerns expressed by reviewers should help determine the faculty to be interviewed and the questions to be asked to know that candidates are meeting national standards.
• Part C (Evaluation of Program Report Evidence) of the National Recognition Report provides a summary of evidence on (1) the candidates’ knowledge of content (Standard 1 Elements a & e); (2) candidates’ ability to understand and apply pedagogical and professional content knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions (Elements b, c, & e); and (3) candidate effects on P-12 student learning (Elements d & f).

Standard 2
• The assessments, scoring, guides, and assessment data for each program indicate the quality of assessments used in the unit assessment system.
• Contextual information submitted at the beginning of the program report provides information about criteria at different transition points.
• Contextual information includes a description of the relationship of the program’s assessments to the unit’s assessment system.
• The section of the program report that describes how faculty have used the assessment data to evaluate and improve the program should provide evidence that faculty are using data for decision making.

Standard 3
• The description for the field experiences and clinical practice in the context section of each program report provide more detail than may be available in the institutional report (IR).
• The assessment instrument, scoring guide, and assessment data for the field experiences and clinical practice are one of the key assessments required for each program. You will have an opportunity to review this part of the assessment system before arriving on campus.

Standard 4
• The National Recognition Report may include feedback on the development of proficiencies related to diversity if the program standards include such expectations.

Standard 5
• The summary of the qualifications of program faculty duplicates the table of faculty attached to the IR, but groups faculty by the programs in which they work.
• Part F.2 (Concerns for possible follow-up by the BOE) of the National Recognition Report may indicate strengths or concerns about the qualifications of faculty to teach in a specific program.

Standard 6
• Contextual information submitted at the beginning of the program report provides information on admission and retention in a program.
• Contextual information includes a description of the relationship of the program to the unit’s conceptual framework, which may be helpful in understanding the unit’s coordination of its programs.

What if the state reviews the programs?
A number of states conduct their own review of programs rather than requiring a national review through NCATE. When the state’s review is similar to NCATE’s program review, the BOE team can depend on the state’s findings to assist them in knowing whether candidates meet state and national standards for Standard 1 and whether the unit is addressing parts of other standards as indicated above.

A state review of programs is considered similar to the national NCATE review if the state agency requires assessments, scoring guides, and assessment data for its review. In these cases, the unit response in the Institutional Report to prompt 1a4 should briefly explain the state review system. In other prompts requesting assessment data, the institution can refer the reader to the explanation in 1a4. If they are available before the visit, the state report(s) on programs should be uploaded at the end of each relevant standard element. The assessment data for programs not reviewed by the state, such as master’s programs in curriculum and instruction, should be discussed in the appropriate prompts. In some states, the state team will be reviewing programs during the on-site visit, which will require the state and BOE teams to share findings throughout the visit.

If the state program review system is not similar to the national NCATE review as described above, the unit must describe the assessments and summarize related data that show that candidates meet national standards in the prompts in the Institutional Report requesting assessment data for Standard 1.
Technology Update

Use of AIMS for Team Assignments

The fall 2008 semester marks the maiden voyage of the Accreditation Information Management System (AIMS) as a mechanism for assigning teams, sharing information about visits, reading and writing BOE reports on-line, and conducting evaluations. NCATE staff has planned several web-seminars to familiarize BOE members and chairs with AIMS. Dates of upcoming web seminars are posted at


Please make plans to attend one of the seminars, or to view the recorded versions, which will be posted on the NCATE website at:


We anticipate that BOE members will have many questions about using the new system for team assignments and logistics. Here are some anticipated questions and answers:

1. How do I submit the Date Availability and Conflict of Interest Form?

Explicit instructions are included in the email sent to BOE members asking them to complete the form. You must use the link in the email to access and submit the form for the first time in a given semester. You will need your ID, which is your email address, and your NCATE password. Both the ID and password are included in the email asking you to complete the Date Availability and Conflict of Interest form.

2. Once I have submitted the form, how do I change it if I need to?

You must first contact Marva Atwater (marva@ncate.org) or Monica Siengo (msiengo@ncate.org) to let them know you want to change the form. They will “unsubmit” your form and then the system will allow you the make the change and submit the form again. To make the change, go to your workspace in AIMS and click on Date Availability and Conflict of Interest Form in the menu. Then, make the change and submit the form.

3. How do I respond to an invitation to serve on a team?

Please do not send an email to Marva or Antoinette. Instead, follow the instructions in the email invitation. You must use the link in the email to respond. Please respond in a timely manner so that you will not delay the formation of the team. If you do not respond within the specified time, you may be replaced on the team.

4. Have I been assigned to a team?

After the assignments have been made, NCATE will send an email invitation with information about each assignment. If you do not receive a team assignment in one semester, you will be among the first members considered for visits in the following semester.

5. When will you hear from your chair?

Most chairs contact team members after the previsit, which takes place between one to two months prior to the visit. After you hear from the chair, please make your travel arrangements immediately.

6. What is the travel code for this semester?

The travel code and travel information are listed in the email that you receive after you have accepted a visit.

7. Do I have to use the NCATE travel agency?

We prefer that you use the NCATE travel agency but this is not mandatory. If you can find cheaper
tickets on the Internet and are comfortable not receiving a reimbursement for the cost of the flight until shortly after the visit, then you can make your own travel arrangements. NCATE reimburses BOE members within two weeks after the receipt of a travel voucher.

8. How do I get into the AIMS database?

To access AIMS you will need your login ID and password. This information is provided on your invitation to serve on a team. Contact Marva Atwater (marva@ncate.org) or Monica Siengo (msiengo@ncate.org) if you do not have access to the email. To access AIMS, go to the URL: http://aims.ncate.org or click on Member Login on NCATE’s homepage (www.ncate.org). Type in your login ID and password. This will give you access to information about the visit and the institution, which can be accessed from the menu on the left side of the screen.

9. Where can I find the Institutional Report and other documents for the visit?

For visits in fall 2008, the Institutional Report (IR) will be posted in AIMS about 30-60 days before the visit. To access the IR, access AIMS, click on Visit Reports, and then click on Institutional Report.

10. Who are the other members on my BOE team?

You can access the team list in AIMS. Go to http://aims.ncate.org, type in your login id and password. Click on BOE Team in the menu on the left side of your screen.

11. Whom should I contact if an emergency arises and I cannot go on a visit?

Please contact Antoinette Mitchell (Antoinette@ncate.org), Marva Atwater (marva@ncate.org), and the team chair, if you are not the chair. It is preferable that you send an email message if you know you can’t make the visit before the visit date. If you find that you cannot make the visit at the last minute, then call the chair and Antoinette Mitchell at 202-466-7496.

12. What should a team chair do if she/he cannot contact a team member?

Chairs should first try emails and phone calls to both work and home. This information is available in AIMS when one clicks on the name of the BOE member on the team list. The team list can be accessed by clicking on BOE Team on the menu on the left side of the screen once you enter AIMS.

13. What steps should team members take if their flight is cancelled or late going to a visit?

Team members should contact the team chair by phone or by email. Most team chairs will provide contact information in case of such an emergency.

14. How can I see my evaluations?

NCATE will generate an annual report for each BOE member with average evaluations data from the past two semesters, beginning at the end of the spring 2009 semester.

Date Availability and Conflict of Interest Form

BOE members will receive the Date Availability and Conflict of Interest Form for the Spring 2009 semester in mid-September. It is of paramount importance that BOE members complete this form in a timely manner. The completed form enables NCATE to make early team assignments from the pool of available team members. Without your timely response, teams cannot be assigned far enough in advance to notify institutions of their BOE teams based on the NCATE timeline and airline tickets cannot be purchased far enough in advance to lower costs. If you have questions about completing the form, please contact Marva Atwater (marva@ncate.org). If you have difficulty completing the form due to technical problems, please contact Cora Mak at cora@ncate.org.
BOE VISITS

Visit Start Times

For most visits, BOE team members should plan to arrive onsite on Saturday morning, saving the cost of hotel rooms on Friday night. BOE members who are unable to arrive in time for the first team meeting on Saturday, because of where they live or where the institution is located, will have to travel on Friday. Visits to large comprehensive institutions may require team members to arrive on Friday night so that the visit can begin on Saturday morning. As much as possible, team chairs should plan for team members to travel on Saturday.

Collaboration is Key in Joint State/NCATE Visits

NCATE has established relationships with 48 states, DC and Puerto Rico. Some states have agreed to conduct joint on-site visits where they select members to serve as state BOE members. The state BOE members join national BOE members to conduct a single visit to an institution. One state member is appointed as State co-chair. The NCATE chair and state BOE co-chair should work collaboratively to plan the previsit, conduct the on-site visit, facilitate the exit conference, compile and edit the BOE report, and respond to the institution’s rejoinder. The roles and responsibilities of the state team co-chair are the same as the NCATE team chair. For additional information on the role of state team members, visit http://www.ncate.org/boe/rolesRespTeamMember.asp?ch=72

NCATE Travel Agency: How are Things Going?

As many of you know, NCATE works with Experient, a travel agency that books flights for visits and helps locate hotels for meetings. Given the exponential increase in the cost of air travel, NCATE is reviewing its travel policies and its relationship with the travel agency. In addition to asking BOE members to book their flights as soon as possible, we ask the travel agent to offer BOE members the least expensive flights, flights with a stop-over, and where there is a significant difference in fares, to offer flights the next day. If, in booking flights for this semester, you have questions about whether or not you are being offered the least expensive flights, please send an email to Monica Siengo at Msiengo@ncate.org. As noted in the Q&A, using the travel agency is encouraged but not required if you can find a less expensive flight on the Internet and are comfortable waiting to be reimbursed until after the visit.

BOE REPORTS

BOE Report to be Written in AIMS

Fall 2008 marks the first semester that BOE Reports will be written online in a new template in AIMS. The new template can be found in AIMS under Visit Reports. It asks members to validate information in the IR, indicate the level (i.e., unacceptable, acceptable, or target) at which each element is addressed, and then write a few paragraphs for each element of the standards. For Standards 1-4, the template provides space for BOE members to write their findings for initial teacher preparation programs, advanced programs for teachers, and advanced programs for other school personnel for each element. For Standards 5 and 6, the template provides space for BOE members to write a few paragraphs of findings for each element at the initial teacher preparation and advanced levels. The template also provides space for teams to cite strengths related to the target level and areas for improvement.

NCATE has developed extensive instructions for BOE members and for BOE Chairs on how to complete the BOE Report in AIMS. These
instructions are available in the Resources section of AIMS. BOE members are encouraged to print these instructions prior to the visit and have them available as you work in the new system on site. BOE members are asked to write their sections of the report directly in AIMS or write them in Word and cut and paste into AIMS.

BOE chairs will pull the sections of the report into one document and the team will group edit that document on the last day of the visit. When they are ready, chairs will send an email to Patty Garvin at NCATE and to team members to let them know that the first draft of the BOE Report is available in AIMS for additional editing. After making changes based on the additional editing, chairs will submit the final BOE report. At that time, the unit, state, and team members will receive an email that the BOE Report has been finalized and is available in AIMS.

We hope that the detailed instructions will help you learn the new system. If you find places where the instructions are not clear, please email that information to Donna Gollnick at Donna@ncate.org or Antoinette Mitchell at Antoinette@ncate.org.

Moving Toward a Paperless System

NCATE’s launch of its Accreditation Information Management System (AIMS) has moved the accreditation process to a paperless system. Board of Examiners (BOE) members will use the web-based AIMS to indicate their conflicts of interest and date of availability for each semester, and team assignments will be made in AIMS. After you accept a team assignment, you will be able to open information about the institution, including their previous accreditation action reports and annual reports. The institutional report (IR) should be available in AIMS 30-60 days before the visit. You will write your section of the BOE report in the new online template and have the opportunity to continue to assist the team chair with editing after the visit. Evaluations of the performance of other team members, including state team members, and the accreditation process will be conducted through AIMS after the visit.

By the end of next spring, you will be able to access a brief summary of evaluations of your own performance. NCATE staff are excited about the potential of AIMS in streamlining the accreditation process and look forward to your recommendations for improving the system further. Some of the features of AIMS that will be used in fall visits are described below.

All institutions are completing their Online IR in AIMS with links to documents on their websites. With web technology, institutions are able to monitor who views which exhibits on what dates. Not all institutions take advantage of this technology, but some have been using it to see if team members have reviewed exhibits before and during the visit. Members are not expected to read all documents before the visit, but the IR and its attachments should be reviewed. Team members are still expected to complete before the visit the full or abbreviated “Planning Instrument,” which is available in the Resources section of AIMS or on NCATE’s website.

Technology has also given us the ability to copy and paste text easily from one document to another. For example, many team members will write their section of the BOE report in Word or other word processing document and copy and paste it into the Online BOE Report. In the new Online BOE Report, team members are expected to write summaries of their findings rather than repeating details from the IR. In other words, the UAB wants to know why you indicated that a standard’s element was being addressed at a specific level (i.e., unacceptable, acceptable, or target).

Tips for Writing the BOE Report

The NCATE process relies on BOE members to write reports that clearly describe how units are meeting the standards. To help make writing the report easier, there are a few things to keep in mind.

In the new sections of the report on strengths for each standard, the team should refer only to work
being done in the unit at the target level of an element. Meeting the standards at the acceptable level is expected; it is not a strength. It may be tempting to show support for the enthusiasm of the faculty or progress made on an area for improvement, but a strength should only be cited if the activities in the unit are related to the standard at the target level.

Institutions’ data on the exact number of professional education faculty and candidates in a unit are not always precise. BOE teams can go to a great deal of effort to pin down the correct number. The UAB has asked that teams not spend too much time worrying about exact numbers in these areas. UAB members are well aware of how difficult this can be, and will not be concerned if the numbers vary slightly from one part of the report to another.

Although the BOE team can not cite AFI s for the lack of national recognition, it should discuss the current status of national program review in the findings section of Standard 1. An area for improvement should be cited for a serious problem raised about a specific program in a National Recognition Report or a pattern across programs if it is confirmed during the on-site visit. Some teams have asked what to do if an AFI was cited in the previous accreditation action report for the program not being nationally recognized and the program still has not gained national recognition by the time of the visit. In these cases, the AFI citing the fact that a program was not nationally recognized should be revised to cite the reason for non-recognition if the team has found that a serious problem in the program still exists at the time of the visit.

Given the new BOE reports template BOE team members are asked to analyze and summarize information provided by the institutions and in interviews. In rare instances when information is taken directly from the IR or other institutional documents, please be sure to cite your references.

And don’t forget the BOE Report Style Guide (http://www.ncate.org/documents/boeMaterials/boe_style_guide.pdf). Team members should follow these guidelines to reinforce the “one voice” behind the report.

**STAFF UPDATE**

**Ivonne Cuadra**, Graphic Design/Communications Assistant. Ivonne graduated from the Art Institute of Washington in March 2008 after she had transferred from the University of Maryland, where she took liberal arts courses. At NCATE, Ivonne produces its “public face” through newsletters, brochures, fliers, CDs, and other printed collateral, as well as producing material for NCATE’s website. She organizes NCATE’s press clips, coordinates sponsor programs at NCATE’s Institutional Orientation, updates mailing lists, and answers questions from the public. Ivonne works with Jane Leibbrand, Vice President for Communications. Her email address is ivonne@ncate.org.

**Federico Palenque**, Finance Assistant. Federico recently retired after 29 years with the Pan American Health Organization Regional Office of the World Health Organization, an agency of the United Nations. He provides customer service for finance transactions, handling requests by phone, fax, e-mail, such as payments against invoices, credit card charges, expense reimbursements for volunteers, and pays expenses for Board of Examiner (BOE) visits. He invoices publication orders; mailing label orders; job vacancy postings on the website and sponsorships at NCATE events. His email address is federico@ncate.org

**Carla Tedford**, Assistant, Institutional Relations. Carla was a temp for several months before she became an official NCATE employee in February. Carla’s recent employment includes working as a temp for various agencies as an executive assistant and as a customer website specialist. She also worked as a senior administrative
specialist for Lockheed Martin in Bethesda, MD and as a senior secretary/marketing coordinator to the director of marketing at Bechtel Telecommunications in Frederick, MD. Carla works with Boyce Williams, Vice President for Institutional Relations. Her e-mail is carla@ncate.org.