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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STANDARDS UPDATE

NCATE Transition Plan: Drawing to a Close

NCATE designed its transition plan to give institutions the opportunity to build performance-based assessment systems that would meet the elements in Standard 2. This academic year is the final year in which the transition plan applies. After this year, the expectation is that the standards will be met fully by all institutions.

As you know, the transition plan applies only to Standards 1 and 2, and requires institutions to meet certain benchmarks each year. BOE members are asked to ensure that units are meeting expectations outlined in the transition plan for visits scheduled in fall 2004 and spring 2005. These expectations also apply to institutions that had their visits delayed from an earlier semester. These expectations are listed below:

A. Units are expected to have performance data from the following sources:
   1. state licensing exams (where applicable)
   2. program review reports or state reviews of programs
   3. graduate/employer surveys
   4. assessments of clinical practice
   5. other key assessments as identified in unit assessment systems

B. Units are expected to have an assessment system in place and operating.
   The assessment system should address:
   1. transition points
   2. major assessments
   3. the design for data collection, analysis, summary and use
   4. measures that address unit operations
   5. description of the use of information technology to maintain the system

C. Units are expected to have developed and implemented internal performance assessments

1. the assessment instruments should be based on professional/state/institutional standards
2. assessment instruments and criteria/rubrics should be developed
3. assessment instruments and criteria/rubrics should be in use
4. data collection should be in process; some analysis should have begun
5. testing for accuracy, consistency and fairness should be occurring

Inevitably the question “How much data is enough?” will arise. For fall 2004 and spring 2005 visits, institutions should at a minimum have one year worth of data for key assessments. Even if the instruments are revised, as we expect they will be, institutions should still have collected and summarized data. In instances in which the institutions do not have candidates who have progressed through the programs (e.g., no candidates have reached the key assessment at the fourth decision point in a redesigned program), then units can present acceptable data from older assessments to demonstrate that particular elements of Standard 1 are being met at the acceptable level.

Given the ongoing work on aligning licensing exams with standards (see “Benchmarking Project” item below), for visits in fall 2004 and spring 2005 BOE members should review licensing exam information for the previous year or trend data from the previous three years.

Benchmarking Project

NCATE’s “80 Percent Rule,” as codified in the first two elements of Standard 1, states that 80 percent of a unit’s program completers must pass the state licensing exam in content, in states that require such exams. A parallel rule exists for the program review process. That is, 80 percent of a program’s completers must pass the state licensing exam in content, in states that require such exams. Though inexact because of varying state cut scores and differing degrees of test alignment with national standards, these requirements were adopted by NCATE as interim measures, while we worked to develop more appropriate measures for determin-
ing candidate content knowledge that could be applied across states. The more appropriate national measures involved developing national cut scores on content knowledge exams that had been aligned with the standards of the specialized professional associations, or national standards, but this project has not yet been completed.

Since May 2002 when the Executive Board approved the project, Emerson Elliot has been working with ETS to align five of the Praxis tests with the national standards and set national cut scores or benchmarks for those exams. NCATE invited NES to participate in a similar project with its tests but has not yet received a favorable response. The ETS collaboration involves working with tests for elementary education, social studies, math, biology and English. So far, a panel of experts has reviewed the tests and found that the tests for elementary education, social studies, and biology were sufficiently aligned. The math test was deemed not in alignment with the standards of NCTM. ETS is revising the test, and another review panel will be convened in the fall. The English test was deemed not sufficiently aligned with NCTE standards, and further discussions between ETS and NCTE are underway.

The second part of the project, setting national benchmarks for the aligned exams, is in process. Elementary and social studies panels have met and made recommendations about national benchmarks. NCATE’s boards will discuss the recommendations and how they might be used in the accreditation process at the NCATE All Boards Meeting in October 2004. NCATE is clear that it remains the state’s purview to set cut scores.

Student Learning

The student learning elements of Standard 1 sometimes raise questions for institutions and for BOE members. The intention of these elements is to address the extent to which teacher candidates understand assessment, use assessments as formative and summative tools in instruction, and develop meaningful learning experiences that help all students learn. In advanced programs for other school personnel, the element refers to the extent to which candidates for other school roles are able to create a positive environment for student learning. Emerson Elliot has written a paper on student learning that will be available on the NCATE website in coming weeks. An example of a well written area for improvement on this topic is the following: “The unit lacks evidence of candidates using assessments to demonstrate their impact on student learning.”

Spotlight on Standards 3 and 4

Standard 3

In fall 2003, twelve percent of the areas for improvement for met standards fell under Standard 3. The areas for improvement cited can be grouped in four categories: collaboration with school partners, criteria for clinical faculty, the structure of the experiences and clinical practice, and assessment of field experiences and clinical practice. Several of the areas for improvement cited for Standard 3 fell under the assessment category. The areas for improvement addressed inconsistent assessment of field experiences and key assessments that were not aligned with candidate proficiencies. Because field experiences and clinical practice present the most logical opportunities for units to assess the skills outlined in Standard 1 (i.e., pedagogy, pedagogical content knowledge, and student learning), the alignment of assessments with stated proficiencies is critical. When key assessments are not aligned, problems may also surface in Standards 1 and 2. In reviewing reports for consistency, BOE members should be mindful of this relationship.

Standard 4

One hundred percent of the units reviewed by the UAB in fall 2003 met Standard 4, some with areas for improvement. The areas for improvement cited for Standard 4 in fall 2003 related to the latter three elements of the standard, the lack of exposure to diverse candidates, faculty members, and P-12 students. Twenty-eight percent of the areas for improvement cited in the fall 2003 semester were cited in this standard, but only one of the areas for improvement was related to aspects of the first element, the element on proficiencies and experiences related to diversity. The UAB at an earlier meeting decided that Standard 4 could not be met if the first
element of the standard was not assessed at the acceptable level. BOE members should not shy away from investigating whether the institutions have clearly articulated proficiencies related to diversity, have developed curriculum and experiences that teach to those proficiencies, have assessments that evaluate candidates based on those proficiencies, and have assessment data to prove that candidates have indeed learned the proficiencies. We hope that all institutions are meeting this important element at the acceptable level. BOE members should be prepared to make the hard call when evidence to the contrary arises.

Accurate Information about NCATE Expectations

With so many people in the NCATE network, misinformation can occasionally spread without the knowledge of NCATE staff. An example of this type of misinformation includes the idea that NCATE has “hidden” expectations for institutions that are not articulated in the standards. Some may believe that NCATE has set a minimum GPA requirement or mandates a particular format for lesson plans or faculty vitae. In fact, NCATE’s requirements are stated explicitly in the Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education and the Handbook for Accreditation Visits; there are no “hidden” expectations. NCATE staff are available to talk with institutions and BOE members to clarify questions regarding requirements.

UAB UPDATE

Standards Revision Process: Call for Comments

In accordance with its constitution, NCATE is currently revising the unit standards. We do not anticipate major changes and hope only to clarify and refine the current standards. NCATE is currently administering a survey on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the standards to deans, NCATE coordinators, board members, and state contacts. If you have not already responded to the survey, please do so. In addition to the survey, we invite the entire NCATE family to send us any comments, concerns, additions, and/or omissions related to the standards. Please send an email to Antoinette@ncate.org by October 13, 2004 for consideration by the Standards Committee. The Committee hopes to end data collection in fall 2004 and present proposed revised standards to the UAB in October 2006. After an additional call for comment, the revised standards will be forwarded to the Executive Board for ratification in spring 2007.

UAB Evaluations of BOE reports

The UAB recognizes the hard work conducted by BOE members and the challenges faced in crafting BOE reports in the required time frame. (The table on the following page provides evaluation information for BOE reports reviewed by the UAB during the past year.)

BOE teams are to be commended for improved ratings in the vast majority of areas, including addressing all elements of the standards and drawing on multiple sources of evidence.

Two areas that received lower ratings in spring 2004 than in fall 2003 were: “the report explained why areas for improvement were not cited when the evidence discussed could presumably lead a team to cite areas for improvement”; and “the report addressed the areas for improvement that were cited.” Teams are reminded to make sure that the narrative and the areas for improvement lead the reader to a consistent conclusion. Check first that each area for improvement is supported by text in the narrative; then check that each unresolved concern in the narrative is cited as an area for improvement.
### UAB’s 2003 Evaluations

[Scale = 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)]

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<tr>
<td>1. The report was adequately edited.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The introduction and conceptual framework sections were sufficiently informative.</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The report incorporated evidence that adequately addressed each element of the standards, including elements related to advanced programs.</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.12</td>
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<td>4. The report included a clear presentation and synthesis of evidence.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.12</td>
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<td>5. The report presented the evidence in enough detail to “make the case” for its findings in the narrative.</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.97</td>
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<td>6. The report included recommendations that were derived logically from the narrative and areas for improvement.</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>3.03</td>
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<td>7. The report drew on multiple sources of evidence.</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.45</td>
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<td>8. The report stated when sufficient evidence was not available for review.</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.10</td>
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<td>9. The areas for improvement that were cited were clearly stated.</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.98</td>
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<td>10. The report was internally consistent—i.e., it did not include contradictory information.</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>3.09</td>
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<td>11. The report placed comments, concerns, and areas for improvement related to the conceptual framework under the appropriate standards.</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. The report made distinctions between initial and advanced programs.</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. The report addressed the areas for improvement that were cited.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. The report adequately addressed previously cited weaknesses/areas for improvement.</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The report did not include prescriptive statements and/or opinions not related to the standards.</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.59</td>
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BOE VISITS

Focused Visits

Many thanks to the team that embarked on NCATE’s first focused visit in spring 2004, and to the four teams that will conduct focused visits in fall 2004. The current version of the guidelines for focused visits are posted on the NCATE website; areas not directly covered by the guidelines should be assumed to be similar to other types of visits. Focused BOE reports should address the entire unmet standard (or standards) and list the previous areas for improvement as new, continued, and/or corrected. NCATE staff recognize that the guidelines may need further refinement over the coming semesters, so team chairs conducting focused visits are particularly encouraged to call the NCATE office if questions arise regarding the procedure for the visit. We look forward to feedback from BOE members regarding how we might improve the process in the future.

Elimination of Third-Year Reports

Fall 2004 is the first semester in which continuing accreditation visits will not incorporate third-year reports. As a reminder, this item appeared in the spring 2003 Update:

As of fall 2002, the Annual Report and Preconditions Audit (ARPA) committee no longer generates third-year reports for institutions. Because of the complexity of the current NCATE standards, the UAB deemed it important for BOE teams to read an institution’s annual reports in their entirety and consider them along with evidence gathered on-site, rather than rely on a summary of the reports. Third-year reports will not be available for institutions whose continuing visits occur in fall 2004 or later.

Alternate Route Programs

What is NCATE’s policy on alternative route programs?

Alternate route programs prepare individuals to work in P-12 classrooms and are therefore included in NCATE’s scope. We have the same expectations for alternate route programs as we do for all other programs. For more on the NCATE policy, see http://www.ncate.org/policies/alternate_routes.htm. The only exception is that if an entity other than the institution makes recommendations for licensure, then the program is not required to be included in the unit’s NCATE review.

What if an entity other than the institution makes recommendations for licensure?

If an entity other than the institution makes recommendations for licensure, then the program is not required to be included in the unit’s NCATE review. For example, the state department of education may ask institutions to provide courses for an alternative program for which the state issues recommendations for licensure.

Do alternative route programs have to meet SPA standards or state standards?

NCATE considers review of programs by experts based on content standards in a given area or discipline an integral part of the accreditation process. Consequently, NCATE expects alternative route programs included in the unit review to meet either SPA or state standards, as indicated in the partnership agreements with states.
Citing Areas for Improvement Related to Program Review

The program review process has been redesigned. For details of the redesign, see [http://www.ncate.org/standard/programstds.htm#changeProcess](http://www.ncate.org/standard/programstds.htm#changeProcess). BOE members will not have the opportunity to view the reports generated by the new process until some visits in spring 2005 and most visits in fall 2005. However, BOE members are asked to cite areas for improvement when (a) units have not yet received decisions on their programs (i.e., they are in the rejoinder process or they are waiting for an initial response) or (b) units have received an adverse decision (i.e., the programs are not recognized). Institutions should be notified that if their programs are “recognized” in the time between the visit and the UAB meeting in the following semester, the UAB will have updated information and adjust areas for improvement as appropriate.

If the programs are recognized or recognized with conditions, then the team should not cite areas for improvement, unless the program reviews indicate weaknesses across programs.

BOE members should follow the same instructions for units with programs reviewed by the states. If the programs do not receive state approval during joint and/or concurrent visits, then an area for improvement should automatically be cited.

Written Areas for Improvement at the Exit Conference

At the exit conference, team chairs are encouraged to provide institutions with a written list of areas for improvement, with the understanding that the substance and wording of areas for improvement are subject to change as the report is edited. A form for this purpose is on page 10 and is posted on the NCATE website.

Revised BOE Report Template

We are pleased to unveil the long-awaited revision to the BOE Report template, which is on the NCATE website at [http://www.ncate.org/accred/boevisit/materials/BOETemplate(revisedSept04).doc](http://www.ncate.org/accred/boevisit/materials/BOETemplate(revisedSept04).doc). The new template is designed to streamline the report-writing process and reduce the amount of time and effort (and space!) needed to write a high-quality report. The revised template should be used with all visits in fall 2004 and beyond. Institutions and states have been notified. The revised template should be used for all types of visits, including first-time, continuing, probation, and focused. BOE members should indicate the type of visit in the space provided on the front page of the template. The revised template includes more questions than the previous template and therefore provides more guidance to teams as they conduct visits and write reports. The questions are aligned with the Unit Standards at the “acceptable” level. NCATE BOE Report readers helped develop the revised template. Consequently, if the team addresses all of the questions, the time and effort spent revising the reports after they have been submitted should decrease drastically. Staff would appreciate feedback on the new template as well as suggestions for revision. Many thanks to Linda Bradley and Pam Magasich, NCATE’s off-site report readers, for their contributions to this effort, as well as to Gary Ingersoll for sharing a draft template he developed.
RESOURCES FOR BOE MEMBERS

AACTE Annual Meeting

At this year’s AACTE annual meeting (February 2004 in Washington, DC), NCATE will host a preconference day on Saturday, February 19. Through lively presentations and interactive sessions, the preconference will concentrate on NCATE’s role in the professionalization of teaching at the institutional, state, and national levels. BOE members are encouraged to attend both the preconference and the general update sessions at AACTE. Information about the meeting is available on the AACTE website: [http://www.aacte.org](http://www.aacte.org). We look forward to seeing many of you in Washington in February!

STAFF UPDATE

Since the last BOE Update, several individuals have joined the NCATE staff. We are pleased to welcome Mary Anne Kirkland, Accreditation Associate. Mary Anne comes to us from the Council of Chief State School Officers, where she worked on the National Center for Education Statistics data handbooks and online databases. Prior to that, Mary Anne worked on the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education at AACTE. Mary Anne is filling the position vacated two years ago by Pam Magasich. We are also pleased to welcome Margie Crutchfield, NCATE’s new associate vice president for program review, Julien Goichot, who has replaced Kevin Morse as webmaster, and Sherie Koob, who has replaced Raisa Kaptsan as finance assistant.
Preliminary Statement of Areas for Improvement

Institution: ______________________ Date of Visit: ____________________

Team Chair:_____________________ Type of Visit:____________________

Disclaimer: Please note that the Areas for Improvement cited below are preliminary and are subject to change as the Board of Examiners Report is finalized. Additional Areas for Improvement may be added or rewritten as the team edits its findings after the visit. These preliminary findings are provided as a courtesy to institutions and should not be considered final. Institutions will receive a draft of the Board of Examiners Report, which includes the final areas for improvement, within 30 days of the visit. Areas for Improvement apply to all levels and all programs unless otherwise specified.

Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

Standard 4: Diversity

Standard 5: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development

Standard 6: Unit Governance and Resources