NCATE

BOARD OF EXAMINERS UPDATE

Fall 2002

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.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NCATE TRANSITION PLAN
(FALL 2002 / SPRING 2003)

The UAB has identified the levels at which units should be able to meet Standards 1 and 2, and these expectations are outlined in the NCATE Transition Plan. Institutions visited in fall 2002 and spring 2003 should have a written assessment system or a written plan for an assessment system in place that includes the elements in Standard 2. The plan should include transition points; major assessments; timelines for development; the design for the collection, aggregation, analysis and use of data; aspects of the system that address unit operations; and the integration of information technology in the maintenance of the system.

Units should be implementing the first steps of their assessment system—this means that units should have developed performance assessment instruments collaboratively with the professional community. The instruments should be based on professional, state and institutional standards. Units should be able to demonstrate that they are engaging in work on rubrics/criteria for scoring assessments. Units should also be able to demonstrate that tests for accuracy, consistency, and fairness are in development. Some data collection efforts should have begun.

Please note that all elements in Standard 2 should either be in place or addressed in the unit's assessment system plan. Areas for improvement should be cited if an element is not in place or not addressed in the assessment system plan. Similarly, data for Standard 1 should either be available for review or provisions for the collection of the data should be clearly indicated in the assessment system plan. Areas for improvement should be cited if data for an element in Standard 1 are not available and provisions for the collection of that data are not addressed in the assessment system plan.

Units must have some performance data available, particularly state licensing exam results (where applicable), surveys of graduates and employers, and assessments of clinical practice. These data should be available for the team. If the unit has not begun collecting data or implementing its assessment system, then areas for improvement should be cited.

CHANGES TO THE ANNUAL REPORT

The format and content of the Annual Report have changed. In an effort to collect data that are comparable across institutions and that are consistent with federal reporting, AACTE and NCATE's Research and Information Committee altered the Annual Report survey instrument. A few definitions changed, and some questions were added while others were deleted. The new instrument, which will be available on the AACTE website in coming weeks, was used for the first time last year. As a result of the changes, the trend data that BOE members receive in preparation for a visit may not be as current as the data in previous semesters. Institutions should have Annual Reports that were submitted in previous years available for review on-site. Team chairs should remind institutions to have these data available.

IMPACT OF FACULTY LOADS

Standard 6 indicates that faculty teaching loads "generally do not exceed 12 hours for undergraduate teaching and 9 hours for graduate teaching. Supervision of clinical practice does not generally exceed 18 candidates for each full-time equivalent faculty member." The suggested faculty and supervision loads are generalizations; the suitability of these loads will depend on institutional context—the size and mission of the institution, and expectations for faculty engagement in research, publication, and service responsibilities.

Areas for improvement related to faculty teaching and supervision loads should focus on the impact of heavy loads rather than merely stating that loads are "excessive" or "exceed the standard." For example, rather than stating that "Teaching loads exceed the NCATE guidelines," the area for improvement should convey the impact heavy loads have on faculty: "Heavy teaching loads prevent faculty from being engaged in scholarship and service" or "Heavy faculty supervision loads have resulted in inadequate supervision for many candidates."

USE OF ADJUNCT FACULTY

While NCATE does not specify the number of part-time faculty that may be employed, Standard 6 does specify that "The unit makes appropriate use of full-time, part-time, and clinical faculty as well as graduate assistants so that program coherence and integrity are assured." Rather than citing an area for improvement that "There is a heavy reliance on part-time faculty," or "The use of part-time faculty is excessive," the area for improvement should indicate the negative impact of a large number of part-time faculty; for example, "Heavy reliance on part-time faculty has resulted in unevenness in the integration of the unit's conceptual framework across programs."

In some cases, units may employ significant numbers of adjunct faculty without harming the integrity and quality of their programs. In these instances, it is generally evident that most adjunct faculty have been employed by the unit over a period of time and are involved in the "life" of the unit, meaning that they are aware of the unit's mission and conceptual framework, participate on committees, and are provided professional development opportunities.

ASSESSING DISPOSITIONS

In many instances, teams describe a unit using a standardized instrument that measures dispositions such as punctuality, dress, observation of rules and regulations, etc. While these are important aspects of professional behavior and units may assess these, unit assessments must also reflect the dispositions identified in its conceptual framework and in professional and state standards. Often team reports do not indicate any connection between dispositions specified in the conceptual framework and dispositions that are assessed. For example, if the unit has described its vision for teacher preparation as "Teachers as agents of change" and has indicated that a commitment to social justice is one disposition it expects of teachers who can become agents of change, then it is expected that unit assessments include some measure of a candidate's commitment to social justice. If assessments do not exist, this should be stated in the report under Standard 1 and an area for improvement should be cited.

DIVERSITY

It is still expected that teams provide data on the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity that exists among unit faculty and candidates, as well as demographic information on the settings where field experiences take place. These data will provide evidence that the unit is (or is not) providing opportunities for candidates to interact with diverse faculty, candidates, and P-12 students. Other evidence includes records of systematic placement in settings where candidates have opportunities to interact with diverse faculty in other units and in P-12 schools, and with diverse candidates from outside the institution.

If the unit is not providing candidates with opportunities to interact with diverse faculty, candidates, and P-12 students, it is more useful to cite the area for improvement as this lack of opportunity rather than the limited diversity. It is also helpful to mention specifically what type of diversity is meant— racial, ethnic, gender, etc. For example, "Candidates at the initial level have limited opportunities to interact with racially and ethnically diverse faculty," rather than "Unit faculty represent limited diversity."

Although units are not required to have a plan for the recruitment of diverse faculty and candidates, they are expected to make "good faith efforts…to increase or maintain" faculty and candidate diversity. The good faith efforts should be described in the BOE report; however, an area for improvement is warranted if no results have been achieved.

STANDARD 1 AND STATE LICENSING EXAMS

Standard 1 asks for a great deal of information about different types of knowledge, skills, and dispositions across three sets of standards–state, institutional, and professional. It is important to synthesize all of this information to convey an understanding of the big picture. At its meeting in March 2002, the UAB concluded that BOE reports should contain more analysis of data. At this stage in the Transition Plan, using multiple measures (including test data), BOE teams must be able to answer the critical question, "Do candidates demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn?"

As part of reporting on candidate performance data in Standard 1, teams should be including trend data on the unit's pass rates. **In instances where pass rates are below the state-required pass rates, it is expected that BOE teams will cite an area for improvement.** Teams should also be describing the efforts the unit is making to help its candidates pass the exams.

Within the next year, NCATE will be required by the U.S. Department of Education to develop policies and procedures to specify that "candidate state licensing test results adjusted to national norms are the primary factor to determine whether the content knowledge component of Standard 1 is met." The UAB will be working on policies and procedures to implement this requirement at its October meeting.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Sometimes, a BOE team discusses a concern within the narrative of a BOE report but does not feel that the concern warrants an area for improvement. If the report does not explain why the concern is not felt to be serious, the UAB may add it as an area for improvement. This creates a difficult situation not only for the institution, who is faced with an area for improvement they may not have rejoined, but also for the BOE members, who may feel their work was undermined; the UAB members, who spend time drafting an area for improvement statement; and NCATE staff, who hear from all of these unhappy individuals.

Therefore, to clarify: **Every concern discussed in the narrative should be either (1) cited as an area for improvement or (2) accompanied by an explanation of why the concern is not serious enough to warrant an area for improvement.** If the team is not sure whether an area for improvement is warranted, **it is fairer to the unit to cite the area for improvement and encourage them to respond to it in their rejoinder, rather than have it added by the UAB.**

Please remember to include rationale statements. Each area for improvement—new, continued, or corrected—should be accompanied by a rationale statement of one or two sentences.

Continued weaknesses should be cited as areas for improvement under the standard to which they are most closely related. Continued weaknesses related to diversity are generally cited under Standard 4; continued weaknesses related to faculty are generally cited under Standard 5, etc.

As you know, the conceptual framework has been integrated into the six NCATE unit standards. To support BOE members in their work on-site, NCATE has developed a matrix which describes common citations related to the conceptual framework and the standard under which they should be placed. Please go to the NCATE website and follow the links to Board of Examiners, Visit Materials, to download the matrix.

COMMENTS FROM THE FIELD: TECHNOLOGY

Many thanks to BOE member Martha Ross for sharing these points to consider around technology. Although the technology needs at each visit may be different, it is important to consider what technology is needed well before the visit. Team members might also note that some technology issues are addressed on the list of suggested agenda items for the previsit, page 105 of the Handbook.

- If team members are bringing their own laptops:
  - ★ Need to have disc and CD drives for sharing information;
  - ★ Need to know what peripherals to bring (for networking, printer cable, phone line connection, etc.);
  - ★ Need to know that printer(s) will be available and the machines will be compatible;
  - ★ Need to have software configurations that are necessary to read university materials from web, CD, or other server; and
  - ★ Need to know how to connect to "back home" (ISP on computer and local number).
- At hotel or workrooms, need plenty of power strips for connecting at meeting table.
- Make sure that there are no unknown passwords for connecting to the Internet, network, etc.

COMMENTS FROM THE EVALUATIONS: PROFESSIONALISM

For the most part, BOE teams are to be congratulated for the professionalism they demonstrate at site visits. Many of the evaluation forms from institutions include phrases such as "helpful throughout the process," "extremely organized," and "open and fair."

However, there were a few concerns raised in Spring 2002 evaluations. These were summarized in words and phrases like "predetermined agenda," "biased," "confrontational," and "hostile." Although these represent only a small fraction of the site visits, it is clear how one team member can leave institutions (and fellow team members) with a negative impression of the NCATE process. Before accepting a team assignment, team members are asked to consider carefully the NCATE Code of Conduct section on Bias, which is reprinted at the end of this document. (The full Code of Conduct is available at http://www.ncate.org/accred/code.htm.)

If a predisposing factor would prevent a team member from conducting an unbiased review of an institution, it is far better to ask for a different assignment than to leave the institution with the impression that a team member has acted unprofessionally.

COMMENTS FROM THE EVALUATIONS:
BOE REPORTS

Keep up the good work! That's the message from the UAB's evaluation of a sampling of BOE reports from fall 2001. (BOE reports from spring 2002 will be reviewed at the October 2002 meeting.) Of 30 reports that received an overall rating, 23.5 were rated "acceptable" and 6 were rated "target." (One report was rated "unacceptable" at the advanced level.) For the introduction section, almost half of the reports were rated at the "target" level.

Some of the suggestions the UAB mentioned most frequently were:
★　　More attention is needed to the advanced level. (UAB members also pointed out a number of instances where this was done particularly well.)
★　　More information is needed on distance-learning/off-campus programs.
★　　Standard 1 needs more information on program reviews.
★　　Standard 4 needs more information on recruitment efforts.
★　　Standard 5 also needs more information on how faculty teaching reflects the conceptual framework.
★　　In some cases, potential areas for improvement were described in the report but not cited.

Evaluation results from spring 2002 BOE reports will be sent later this fall.

AFTER THE VISIT
(OR WHY IT ONLY *SEEMS* LIKE THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME BEFORE THE UAB)

After the visit, your team chair is busy getting feedback from you, from NCATE, and from the institution on the draft BOE report. The chair then finalizes the report and sends it back to NCATE, and NCATE copies the report and sends it to the institution and to state partners. This is supposed to happen **within 30 days of the visit**. The institution then has 30 days to submit a rejoinder—after which, according to policy adopted in 2001, the rejoinder is sent to the team chair and he or she has an opportunity to submit a formal response. Finally, the BOE report, rejoinder, and team chair response are submitted to UAB members in time for them to read and digest the information prior to their March meeting.

That's a lot to happen in a relatively short time, especially given that many institutions close for winter holidays and many BOE members have other things they'd rather be doing on cold December evenings. It's easy to see how a delay anywhere in the process can make things very rushed at the end (not to mention the increased time staff members spend on the phone with unhappy institutions, state partners, and UAB members, explaining where their documents are). Therefore, when your team chair asks for feedback or additional information for the BOE report, please consider it a request from the entire NCATE community—and please do your best to respond in a timely way. We all thank you greatly.

EXAMPLES WANTED

nstitutions love examples. If in the course of your visit, your team identifies a particularly strong institutional report, conceptual framework, or visit schedule, please forward the name of the institution and the type of document to Antoinette Mitchell at antoinette@ncate.org. NCATE is collecting such documents to display on its website.

Similarly, if your team identifies a particularly strong instrument assessing content knowledge, please forward the name of the institution and the type and/or title of the assessment to Emerson Elliot at emerson@ncate.org. Emerson is heading a committee of experts who will review the assessments and identify several examples for public display.

HANDBOOKS HAVE BEEN MAILED

The 2002 *Handbook for Accreditation Visits* combines information for BOE members, first-time institutions, and continuing institutions. If you did not receive one, please contact Jenn-Claire Kinchen, Communications Assistant, at (202) 416-6161 or jenn@ncate.org. In the meantime, you can view the handbook online at http://www.ncate.org/accred/handbook/hbk_toc.htm.

NEW TRAINING MODULES ONLINE

Training modules for all six standards, as well as the conceptual framework and other topics, are now online at http://tlt.cudenver.edu/NCATE. The modules provide practice interpreting the type of data you will be asked to look at before and during the site visit. BOE members have said that these modules are a helpful "refresher course" on the standards, and we would love to hear your feedback as well, at BOEModules@ncate.org. either on your own or with your team, working through some or all of these modules before your site visit can help you feel more knowledgeable and confident during the visit.

Kudos and thanks to BOE member Susan Tucker and members of the Technology and Learning Team at the University of Colorado at Denver—Scott Grabinger, Jenn Light, and Travis Chillemi—for their leadership in developing these modules!

STANDARDS MANUAL MISPRINT

There is a misprint in the 2002 NCATE *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education* manual on page 38. Under the rubric for "Unit Budget" in Standard 6, the "Acceptable" and "Target" language has been reversed due to a printing error. The correct language is:

Standard 6
Unit Budget

ACCEPTABLE	TARGET
The unit receives sufficient budgetary allocations at least proportional to other units on campus or similar units at other campuses to provide programs that prepare candidates to meet standards. The budget adequately supports on-campus and clinical work essential for preparation of professional educators.	Unit budgetary allocations permit faculty teaching, scholarship and service that extend beyond the unit to P-12 education and other programs in the institution. The budget for curriculum, instruction, faculty, clinical work, scholarship, etc., supports high quality work within the unit and its school partners.

CORRECTION IN SPRING 2002 *BOE UPDATE*:

In the Spring 2002 *BOE Update*, a half-sentence was omitted from the Policy on Alternate Routes in the NCATE Review. The policy should read:

Policy on Alternate Routes in the NCATE Review

Alternate route programs administered by the unit and leading to the unit's recommendation for a state license must meet NCATE standards. If a campus is preparing education candidates through one or more alternate routes, the program(s) must be included in the NCATE review. Alternate route programs must respond to state and professional standards through a review by either the state or specialized professional associations as described in the state/NCATE protocol, which is available on NCATE's website. Alternate programs will be reviewed in the same manner as other programs. The BOE team will interview program administrators, P-12 partners, candidates in the program, and faculty. **The BOE team will also expect to see assessment data, completion rates, and other performance data** for candidates in alternate route programs as part of the unit's exhibits**. The BOE team may cite areas for improvement related to specific programs, including alternate route programs.

STAFF CHANGES AT NCATE

Since the last staff update, NCATE has welcomed **Alison Gillespie**, Assistant to the Senior Vice President; **Jenn-Claire Kinchen**, Communications Assistant; and **Jim Convery**, System Support Specialist. Thanks to Jenn for putting this *BOE Update* in PageMaker! We have also bid a happy second retirement to Bill Freund, Director of Information Services. Finally, we have (mostly) bid farewell to Pam Magasich, who served for ten years in the accreditation department before leaving NCATE this summer to help St. Petersburg College in Florida establish a School of Education. (We say "mostly" because Pam has graciously agreed to continue reading draft BOE reports from the beach!) She will be greatly missed by the NCATE staff as well as by many on the BOE.

NCATE CODE OF CONDUCT: BIAS

Board members and program reviewers shall:

1. Not advance either personal agendas or the agendas of organizations with which they may be affiliated in the conduct of accreditation reviews by attempting to apply personal or partisan interpretations of standards.

2. Examine the facts as they exist and not be influenced by past reputation, media accounts, etc., about institutions or programs being reviewed

3. Exclude themselves from participating in NCATE activities if, to their knowledge, there is some predisposing factor that could prejudice them with respect to the accreditation of institutions, partnerships with states, or approval of a professional organization's guidelines; and

4. Exclude themselves from NCATE activities if "they are philosophically opposed to or are on record as having made generic criticism about a specific type of institution or program allowable under the standards."

("Principles, Protocols and Etiquette for the NASM Accrediting Commission." Reston, Virginia: National Association of Schools of Music, September 1998, p.7.)