Institutional Rejoinder to the NCATE Board of Examiners’ Report

Continuous Improvement

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Standard 2 is the standard on which the unit is moving to the Target Level.

Prepared subsequent to the NCATE/WVDE Site Visit

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Rejoinder to BOE Report

This rejoinder is written in response to the NCATE Board of Examiners’ Report on the continuing accreditation visit to West Liberty University, March 27-29, 2011. This was a joint accreditation visit by NCATE and the West Virginia State Department of Education.

We would like to thank the members of the Board of Examiners who took the time to participate in our site visit for continuing accreditation in March. The BOE report has recommended that all six NCATE Standards are met for both our initial and advanced programs, and we are pleased to concur with their collective judgment.

We sincerely hope that our manner of presenting the information in this report meets with the approval of the Unit Accreditation Board and makes it easy for the UAB to link our comments with the respective sources in the BOE Report.

Areas for Improvement - New

Standard 2

“Initial Program - Candidate assessment data have not been systematically collected, compiled, aggregated, summarized, and analyzed.”

BOE Rationale – “Three years of assessment data for key assessments were not available to the team. The only long term data available were Praxis test scores and student teaching evaluations. No data on other assessments prior to 2009 were available. In 2009, under new administration, a data management system (LiveText), was adopted. Since that time the unit has been developing key assessments and rubrics and entering the information in LiveText. However, less than three years of data are available, and in many cases, data from only one administration of assessments were available.”

The BOE is correct in their assertion that minimal data was available for the newly designed assessments presented at the on-site visit. Prior to the arrival of a new Dean for the College of Education, the previous system of assessment had numerous holes, was inaccurate, and was not providing meaningful data to drive the teacher education program. LiveText was quickly adopted in Fall 2009, and existing assessments were extensively revised to provide more useful and dynamic data across the entire unit.

Given the extensive revision to the assessment system in the 18 months prior to the on-site visit, this cited area for improvement is clearly based on the lack of available data. However, the accreditation team that prepared the reports, evidence, and this rejoinder were not able to find any description or directive in Standard 2 that prescribed a minimal amount of data that needed to be made available to the BOE. What was apparent was that data collection was systematic, meaningful, and shared with all interest members. The BOE did not argue that the newly designed assessment system was not meeting these aspects of the standard. This is
evidenced in the BOE Report in the following:

1. The BOE felt confident removing the previous AFI:

   “The unit's assessment plan does not include a clearly identified process for using assessments and evaluations to manage and improve the operations of the unit.”

   Rationale: “The unit describes a process by which it uses the data it collects to evaluate its candidates. No specific data was provided on how the unit uses the data it collects to manage and improve the operations of the unit. The AFI is being removed because there is a process in place to use data for unit operations improvement. The unit provided several examples on how data has been used to make unit changes.”

2. The design and use of assessment was cited as a strength in the BOE: “The unit has adopted a data management system that easily stores and retrieves data. Faculty and students can easily access the data that enables them to reflect on their own work. Assessment data from candidates are based on multiple assessments from both internal and external sources. This data is now systematically collected as candidates progress through programs.”

**Areas for Improvement - Remaining**

**Standard 4**

“Candidates at the initial and advanced levels have little opportunity to interact with faculty from diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds.”

BOE Rationale – Only one faculty member in the professional education unit is from a non-white ethnic background. Only nine percent of the faculty on campus are from a non-white ethnic background and there are no African American faculty on campus. Additionally 94 percent of school based faculty are white.

“Candidates at the initial and advanced levels have limited opportunity to interact with candidates from diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds.”

BOE Rationale - Seventy-eight of the current 80 candidates in the advanced program are white, non-hispanic. Ninety-four percent of candidates in the initial programs are white. Ninety-two percent of the campus population is white. Only two of 80 candidates in the advanced program are of a non-white, non-Hispanic background.”

The BOE has sited only lack of racial diversity in maintaining both of these areas for improvement. The geographical area where West Liberty University is located (the northern panhandle of West Virginia) is NOT racially diverse. According to the 2010 census, the state is 93.9% white, 3.4% Black, 1.5% with two or more races, and 1.2% Hispanic. All other reported
races reported populations less than 1% of the state population (US Census Bureau, 2010). In addition, only 17.1% of the state’s population has a Bachelor’s degree or higher. With such narrow demographic parameters, it is difficult to recruit diverse students or faculty that are not native to the area. There are little cultural supports available for these populations outside the campus community. Moreover, the pool of diverse applicants is not available. In her 1999 study, Sally Lubek¹ determined 86.5% of teachers in the United States were white, non-hispanic. It would be difficult for institutions even in the most highly diverse areas to recruit qualified faculty in teacher preparation of ethnic diversity.

However, West Liberty University has made efforts to increase diversity and advertise for diverse faculty. Both positions open at the conclusion of the spring semester were extensively advertised. The qualified applicants for both positions included ONLY white applicants. Additionally, although the diversity in the advanced track is even less diversified, the program is still in its infancy. The candidate pool for the advanced program is in geographic proximity to the university, which as was stated above, is extremely narrow in its diversity.

Thank you for taking the time to review and consider our rejoinder to these three areas for improvement.

¹ Available at http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/USCaseStudy/chapter5.html