

Update on the Unification of TEAC/NCATE

June 2010

Overview of this Report

This report presents an update on the activities related to the unification of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item.

Background

The 2010 NCATE Clinic for state partners and for specialized accrediting agencies was held in Phoenix, Arizona on May 19-21. At this meeting, Frank Murray, President of TEAC, Mark LaCelle-Peterson, TEAC Vice President, James Cibulka, NCATE President, and Donna Gollnick, NCATE Senior Vice President, presented a session entitled “NCATE-TEAC Design Team: Where We Stand”. Earlier in the spring, representatives from TEAC and NCATE presented similar information at the AERA conference in Denver, Colorado.

Nearly two years ago, the NCATE-TEAC Design team began discussing the possibility of unifying the two federally approved accrediting bodies for educator preparation. Since that time, the unification concept has moved from one of possibility to one of near certainty.

While many of the details of the unification process are still to be worked out, some of the important aspects of what accreditation may look like under this unified system were shared in a general way. The summary below is CTC staff’s understanding at this point in time of the unification process.

Rationale for unification: Both NCATE and TEAC officials stressed the importance of a single, unified voice for accreditation of educator preparation in the U.S. today. Both of the agencies stressed shared objectives such as greater attention to outcomes, greater attention to candidate assessments by programs, flexibility, cost effectiveness, improved clinical and real world practice, and the recognition of the importance of multiple pathways. In addition, the two agencies have agreed to “blend the best attributes of both agencies” and share a commitment to “fewer, clearer, higher standards.”

Substantial progress has been made in some aspects of creating a unified body. Below are some of these areas of preliminary agreement. Please note that the summary reflects a point in time and that until the proposal is final, aspects of these may change significantly.

- *New Name:* Tentatively, this new body is entitled “Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation” or CAEP.
- *Accreditation Options:* In the spirit of blending the “best attributes of both agencies” and of providing institutions with flexibility in accreditation, the current discussion about

accreditation options suggest that there will be four types of accreditation options under the new accrediting agency. These are the two currently offered by NCATE: Continuous Improvement and Transformational Initiative and the two currently offered by TEAC: the TEAC Inquiry Brief and the TEAC internal academic audit. At the clinic meeting in May, many states questioned the role of the states in determining whether or not all options would be offered in every state. It was made clear by the presenters that the intent of the Design Team was that all options would be made available to all institution in all states with state agreements. However, given the past nature of the NCATE state protocol agreements and due to the differences in state statutes regarding accreditation of educator preparation, it is feasible that this aspect of this unification may differ from state to state.

- *Governance Structure:* Agreements are being worked out on the governance structure of the new entity and for the transition from an initial board to a more permanent board with all the necessary agreements related to terms, representation, and so forth. Initially, it is expected that the current design team members (or representatives) will serve as the first board with more permanent members being phased in over time.
- *Unification of NCATE Standards/TEAC Guidelines* - The Design Team has been discussing areas of commonalities and differences between NCATE and TEAC accreditation standards, guidelines and processes. The Design Team representatives shared that there is likely to be a set of common standards which melds together important aspects of the NCATE unit standards and the TEAC guidelines. It is anticipated that a set of standards for the new entity will be adopted temporarily for a period of two years, while more permanent standards are discussed and adopted. A matrix identifying the NCATE standards and TEAC guidelines has been prepared and is being used to guide this work. The Design Team will make this matrix available in the future.

Some of the challenges still ahead were acknowledged. Some of these include:

- *Program Accreditation versus Unit Accreditation:* NCATE's approach to accreditation is on the Unit while TEAC allows individual programs to apply for TEAC accreditation. This fundamental difference in approaches between the two accrediting bodies has yet to be resolved. Discussions continue on this matter.
- *Development of Bylaws:* The NCATE and the TEAC Design Team will be working on a bylaw document which, as with any organization, will serve as a foundational document for its operations.
- *U.S. Department of Education/Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) process for approving new accrediting bodies:* Currently, NCATE and TEAC are approved by the federal government as separate accrediting agencies. The new entity would have to apply for and go through the process for approval as a stand alone accrediting body. This process is rigorous and could take a number of years. In addition, because of some restructuring within the federal government, it is anticipated

that the approval process would not begin until the restructuring is complete. Until such time that the new unified body would be approved, NCATE and TEAC would maintain its individual approval status but operate in tandem.

Next Steps

The NCATE-TEAC Design Team is scheduled to meet in July to draft a formal proposal for unification. Details of that plan are expected to be available soon thereafter. NCATE has promised additional updates and information as more details are worked out by the Design Team. Staff will provide an update to COA at its August meeting.

