

Discussion of National Accreditation Processes--NCATE Continuous Improvement and TEAC

May 2011

Overview of this Report

This agenda item provides information about accreditation visits completed in 2010-2011 that were held jointly with one of the national educator preparation accrediting agencies.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item.

Background

The Commission has a policy of working in a collaborative manner if an institution elects to seek national accreditation in addition to the Commission's accreditation. The first national accrediting agency that the Commission worked with was the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

California's partnership agreement with NCATE began in 1989 and is renewed periodically. In 2007, staff updated the protocol agreement to reflect the revised accreditation system as adopted by the Commission. The NCATE partnership protocol defines our working relationship with NCATE and specifies how joint visits are to be conducted. Most recently the protocol was updated in August 2010 to address observers at joint CTC-NCATE site visits: <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-agendas/2010-08/2010-08-item-15.pdf>.

At its January 2010 meeting, the COA took action to approve the initial agreement with the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-agendas/2010-01/2010-01-item-15.pdf>). The agreement defines how the Commission's accreditation system will work with the TEAC process for interested institutions. As of this time, only one institution has committed to working with both the Commission and TEAC for joint accreditation.

NCATE Continuous Improvement Pilot

In the 2010-2011 year, four joint CTC-NCATE visits were held that piloted the Continuous Improvement (CI) model. Two of the visits were initial NCATE visits and two were continuing visits. The NCATE CI model requires that the Institutional Report (IR) be submitted prior to the site visit and an Off-Site Review is held. The amount of time the IR has to be submitted prior to the visit has increased and by the 2012-13 year all IRs will be due a full year prior to the scheduled site visit. Once the IR is submitted, an Off-Site Review team is convened to review the IR and all supporting evidence. This takes place within 1-2 months of when the IR is submitted.

The Off-Site Review (OSR) is an extended discussion among the team members who have carefully read the IR and reviewed all supporting documentation and evidence. In addition, a draft report for each of the six NCATE standards is prepared by the team members prior to the OSR. The OSR utilizes webinar technology along with a conference call such that all team members can talk with each other and view a common document.

A report is developed from the OSR and provided to the institution, usually within 2 weeks to a month of the OSR. The report identifies questions or concerns from the review of the IR and the data provided by the institution and lists evidence that will need to be reviewed at the site visit.

The institution then develops an Institutional Report Addendum (Addendum) to respond to the issues in the report. The Addendum needs to be uploaded into the NCATE web environment a minimum of one month prior to the visit. Once the Addendum is developed and submitted, the IR is no longer used by the team. The Addendum provides clarification and additional information to the team and is referenced during the site visit. There can be links out to additional data or other evidence in the Addendum.

Because of the Off-Site Review and the report focusing the site visit, NCATE has shortened its visits from Saturday to Wednesday visits to Sunday to Tuesday visits. California was able to participate in a very early joint CI visit in March 2010. Based on the experience at that visit, negotiations were held with NCATE to ensure that initial NCATE CI visits in California would continue to be Sunday to Wednesday visits to ensure sufficient time to investigate all aspects of the standards. For the initial joint visits, the Sunday to Wednesday visit allowed for all work to be completed.

The two continuing joint CTC-NCATE visits in 2010-11 were held in the Sunday to Tuesday timeframe. The NCATE team was able to easily complete its work within the shortened timeframe. But the California Program Sampling team members were rushed in the shorted visit. Staff has met and developed strategies to put in place for the 2011-12 visits to address this concern. The NCATE team members have completed a significant portion of their work prior to arriving at the site visit. It will be important to align the amount of work completed by the California team members focusing on the approved programs prior to the visit with the NCATE team so that both parts of the team can complete all required work within the time frame for the visit.

Initial TEAC Visit in California

The partnership between the Commission and TEAC is new. Only one joint CTC-TEAC visit has been held. The joint CTC-TEAC visit was held on a Sunday to Wednesday.

The charge to the site visit teams from the Commission and TEAC differ. TEAC auditors must confirm that data exists to support the claims made by the institution in its Inquiry Brief. The auditors want to see data tables with candidate assessment or program effectiveness data. The auditors do not make any decisions or recommendations on standards or an accreditation decision.

The CTC team is required to collect information, including candidate assessment and program effectiveness data, and make decisions for each of the Commission's Common Standards and all appropriate program standards. In addition the California team develops an accreditation recommendation which is forwarded to the COA.

Prior to the visit this distinction of purpose for the teams was understood and the expectation was that the teams would at times conduct interview together but that other work would be completed independently.

During the visit, it became clear that the focus for the interviews differed for the two teams. The TEAC interviews with institutional representatives, candidates, and stakeholders focused on hypothetical situations and what the individual believed someone prepared by the institution would say or do and why. In addition, TEAC had a survey that each individual coming to an interview needed to complete. Therefore although the two teams completed their work at the same time each group worked independently.

Reflections on the 2010-2011 Joint Accreditation Site Visits

A number of staff and members of the BIR have discussed and reflected on the joint accreditation site visits held in 2010-11. The three accreditation systems differ in focus. Each system is clearly focused on ensuring that educators are well prepared to do their jobs when they leave the program. But each of the three systems considers the inputs to the programs (coursework and field experience and the design of the program) to a different extent. In addition the systems are more or less prescriptive as to the specific features of the overall system. The Commission’s system of Biennial Reports and Program Assessment is more prescriptive than either the NCATE or TEAC system. A summary of the three systems is provided below:

TEAC: Show us what your completers are able to do.

NCATE: Show us what your completers are able to do, and show us the unit infrastructure that ensures that you will continue to monitor and improve results in program and unit operations.

Commission: Show us what your completers are able to do; show us that the pathways you used to get those results are aligned with CTC Program Standards; show us processes whereby you will assess and improve programs, and show us the unit infrastructure that monitors both program and unit operations.

It seems that it will be important to continue to monitor and reflect as NCATE and TEAC unify into CAEP. The CAEP system will need to be integrated with the Commission’s accreditation system in the future.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to monitor the accreditation processes of the national accrediting bodies: NCATE and TEAC. In the 2011-12 year there are five California site visits scheduled which involve a national accrediting body. One of the visits is a pilot of the Transformation Initiative model for NCATE. Staff will report on these visits in the 2011-12 year.

Institution	Accrediting Partner	Type of Visit		Dates
CSU Los Angeles	NCATE	Continuing	Continuous Improvement	Oct. 30-Nov 1
University of San Diego	NCATE	Continuing	Transformation Initiative	Nov. 6-8
CSU Dominguez Hills	NCATE	Continuing	Continuous Improvement	Nov. 6-8

Institution	Accrediting Partner	Type of Visit		Dates
Pt. Loma Nazarene University	NCATE	Initial	Continuous Improvement	Feb 5-8
Sonoma State University	NCATE	Continuing	Continuous Improvement	Mar. 4-6

In addition, NCATE and TEAC are continuing the unification process and creating the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP).