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# 2E

## Action

### *Educator Preparation Committee*

### **Initial Institutional Approval – Stage III: Consideration of Provisional Approval for Northeastern University: Mills College**

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**Executive Summary:** This agenda item presents, as part of the Initial Institutional Approval process, Northeastern University: Mills College’s responses to the Common Standards for consideration and possible Provisional Approval by the Commission.

**Recommended Action:** That the Commission grant Provisional Approval to Northeastern University: Mills College and set the Provisional Approval period to be three years.

**Presenter:** Michele Williams-George, Consultant, Professional Services Division

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## **Initial Institutional Approval – Stage III: Consideration of Provisional Approval for Northeastern University: Mills College**

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### **Introduction**

This agenda item presents, as a part of Stage III of the Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) process, the Northeastern University: Mills College's (NE:MC) responses to the Common Standards for consideration of Provisional Approval by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission). All Common Standards responses have been reviewed by a team of Board of Institutional Review (BIR) members and have been determined to be aligned. If granted Provisional Approval, the next step in the process would be the review of NE:MC's responses to the Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject, Early Childhood Special Education, and Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Program Standards by a BIR team. When reviewers determine that the program standards are aligned, the proposed program will be considered for Initial Program Approval by the Committee on Accreditation (COA). If approved, the institution may offer the program for the three-year provisional period as specified by the Commission.

### **Background**

California Education Code §44372(c), provides the Commission with the authority to accredit institutions to offer programs that lead to a credential to serve as an educator in California's public schools. The Commission has established the IIA process whereby an institution seeking to offer educator preparation program(s) in California must first satisfactorily complete five stages to be approved as a program sponsor.

At the December 2015 Commission meeting, the Commission approved a new IIA process as part of the Strengthening and Streamlining Accreditation project. Updates to the IIA process were subsequently approved during the February 2017, April 2022, and October 2022 Commission meetings. The process requires the satisfactory completion of five approval stages. The submission of Common Standards and Preconditions is Stage III of the five-stage process, as indicated in the highlighted column of the chart on the following page. Completion of this stage of the process results in a determination by the Commission of whether to grant the institution Provisional Approval. Provisional Approval permits the institution to offer an educator preparation program once the program standards are found to be aligned by a BIR team and the proposed programs are subsequently approved by the COA in Stage IV.

## Stage III: Five Stages of the Initial Institutional Approval Process

### Initial Institutional Approval: Five Stages Chart

The Northeastern University: Mills College is seeking approval of Stage III as highlighted in the chart below.

IIA Process	Stage I - Prerequisites	Stage II – Eligibility Requirements	Stage III – Provisional Approval	Stage IV – Initial Program Approval	Stage V – Provisional Site Visit and Full Approval
<b>Purpose</b>	Ensures legal eligibility of institution in California  Ensures institution understands requirements of Commission’s accreditation system	Ensures that institution has capacity to sponsor effective programs	Ensures institution meets all Common Standards	Ensures all proposed programs meet all relevant program standards and program-specific preconditions	Program operates for 2-4 years and hosts a provisional accreditation site visit
<b>Institutional Requirements</b>	Must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have legal eligibility</li> <li>• Attend Accreditation 101 with institutional team</li> </ul>	Submit responses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 Eligibility Criteria</li> <li>• Initial Program Preconditions</li> <li>• General Precondition #9</li> </ul>	Submit responses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Standards</li> </ul>	Submit responses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program-Specific Preconditions</li> <li>• Program Standards</li> </ul>	Must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect data</li> <li>• Host provisional site visit</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed By</b>	Staff	Staff	BIR	<b>Preconditions:</b> Staff <b>Program Standards:</b> BIR	Site Visit Team & COA
<b>Authority</b>	Staff	Commission	Commission	COA	Commission
<b>Decision</b>	Determine Eligibility for Stage II	Eligibility: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grant</li> <li>2. Deny</li> </ol>	Provisional Approval: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grant</li> <li>2. Deny</li> </ol>	Program(s): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve</li> <li>2. Deny</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grant Full Approval</li> <li>2. Grant Full Approval &amp; Remand to COA to Address Stipulations</li> <li>3. Continue Provisional Status for 1 Year to Address Stipulations</li> <li>4. Deny Approval</li> </ol>
<b>IIA Status*</b>	Not Approved	Not Approved	Provisional Approval**	Provisional Approval***	Full Approval

\*At conclusion of stage

\*\*Institutionally approved but cannot offer programs

\*\*\*May begin offering approved program

### **Northeastern University: Mills College**

Northeastern University: Mills College (NE:MC) completed Stages I and II of the IIA process and was approved as an eligible institution by the Commission at its [February 2023 Commission meeting](#). This action allowed NE:MC to move forward to Stage III in which responses to Preconditions and Common Standards were submitted, as linked in this item. Currently, NE:MC seeks Provisional Approval from the Commission. If approved, NE:MC will seek COA approval of their proposed programs which include the following:

- Preliminary Multiple Credential.
- Preliminary Single Subject Credential.
- Early Childhood Special Education Credential.
- Preliminary Administrative Services Credential.

### **Stage III: Review to Determine Alignment with Common Standards**

In keeping with the Commission's process for IIA, NE:MC submitted its responses to the Common Standards. Two BIR members reviewed the Common Standards and have found them to be aligned.

Summaries of NE:MC's responses to the Common Standards are included in this agenda item. The [complete Stage III submission of NE:MC's responses](#) is available on their website.

It is an important reminder that although the responses to the Common Standards in this agenda item can provide some indication of the design of the programs the institution proposes to offer, detailed program information will be provided in the institution's responses to the program-specific Program Standards in the next stage, Stage IV of the IIA process. The responses to the program standards will be reviewed by a team of BIR members to determine alignment. Once the review team has determined that the responses are aligned to the program standards, an agenda item will be brought to the COA for consideration of Initial Program Approval for the proposed programs.

## Initial Program Preconditions

### ***(1) Demonstration of Need***

To be granted initial program accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the program sponsor must demonstrate the need for the type of program in the service area in which it will operate or a need for educators prepared through the specific program delivery model. Proposals must include data on the number of individuals currently serving on less than full credentials, where available, in the service area of the proposed program, projected need based on a needs analysis, and affirmations from employers with their anticipated hiring need for individuals with the planned credential.

Meets Precondition: Yes

#### *How NE:MC Meets the Precondition:*

Prior to its acquisition by Northeastern University, Mills College was a consistent source of educators for Alameda County, particularly Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) which was a primary partner of the Mills College programs. Using current OUSD data including *Certificate Hiring Season Summary Reports*, *Teacher Credentials Reports*, and the *2020-2021 FTE of Teachers with Various Levels of Preparation by School District*, NE:MC showed the continued need for educators in Alameda County. In the 2021-22 academic year, OUSD alone reported 619 vacancies for PK-12 teachers and 36 vacancies for administrative positions. Data for this same year also showed that 36% of credentialed teachers were teaching out of field and that 24% of all emergency-credentialed teachers taught special education. This information led NE:MC to affirm its intent to re-establish educator pipelines developed by Mills College. The institution further verified the need with the Teacher Supply, 2020-21 Report to the Legislature.

### ***(2) Collaboration in Program Design and Implementation***

To be granted initial program accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the program sponsor must demonstrate evidence of collaboration between institutions of higher education, employers of credentialed educators, and TK-12 practitioners in the design of the program. This evidence must include verification that the partners will share authority and responsibility for the implementation and continuous improvement of the proposed educator preparation program as negotiated in the partnership agreement.

Meets Precondition: Yes

#### *How NE:MC Meets the Precondition:*

As part of the Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) process, Northeastern University has formed an Advisory Committee which includes a broad representation of the local educational community including Saint Mary's College, San Jose State University, and three representatives from OUSD. The committee met on December 7, 2022, and was provided historical and contextual information regarding the transition to Northeastern University at Mills College, an overview of the IIA process, and their responsibilities as members of the Advisory Committee. Each

committee member has committed to signing a charter agreement outlining their responsibilities and verifying the expected length of commitment. Once the institution's programs are approved, the Advisory Committee will meet twice each academic year. The Stage III submission provides links to the list of committee members as well as the charter agreement.

***(9) Faculty and Instructional Personnel Participation***

All faculty and instructional personnel employed by colleges and universities who regularly teach one or more courses in an educator preparation program leading to a credential, shall actively participate in the public school system at least once every three academic years, appropriate to their credential area. Faculty who are not in the Department, School or College of Education are exempt from this requirement. Reference: Education Code Section 44227.5 (a) and (b).

Meets Precondition: Yes

*How NE:MC Meets the Precondition:*

Northeastern University intends to retain many of the faculty who taught in the educator preparation programs under the Mills College sponsorship. All but three faculty are also practitioners in the field and so meet this Precondition requirement. The three remaining faculty will be program directors and will meet this requirement as they continue professional obligations begun with Mills College. The submission includes a list of faculty members and how each member actively participates in the public school system.

## Common Standards Responses

*All responses to the Common Standards have been deemed, by a team of BIR reviewers, to be aligned. Beneath each Common Standard is information and excerpts from Northeastern University: Mills College Common Standards submission. The [2015 Common Standards](#) are provided here as a reference.*

### **Common Standard 1 – Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation**

NE:MC will develop scholar-practitioners through integrating theories and research-driven teaching and learning. This approach will guide candidates to value the rich diversity in schools, while critically examining their own practice as well as institutional and societal structures and policies. In addition, each credential program will be further guided by additional research relevant to the candidates and students served by that specific credential and aligned to the specific state-adopted curricular standards and frameworks. The institution's submission identifies the specific theorists used both overall and in each program.

Faculty, instructional personnel, and constituents in the credential programs will participate in organizing, coordinating, and participating in general decision-making processes for all programs. Along with other evidence, the institution provided a Table of Program Personnel which identifies each constituent group and its collaborative responsibilities and draft agendas for meetings.

NE:MC will collaborate in a variety of ways with colleagues in local P-12 settings and institutions of higher education, as well as with members of the broader educational community. The majority of instructional personnel will serve in their roles at the institution while also serving as educators and administrators in the broader educational community, including nearby P-12 school sites, colleges, and universities. These dual roles will enable them to bring rich experiential and current knowledge to their instruction and candidate advising. NE:MC intends to continue relationships that were established by Mills College before its closure and includes in the submission both a list of current and anticipated P-12 partners as well as the MOUs relevant to each candidate-placement type.

NE:MC is committed to providing comprehensive support for the effective operation of each proposed educator preparation program. To support this commitment, the institution reiterates support identified in its Stage 2: Eligibility Requirements submission which provided a proposed operational budget through fiscal year 2025. The unit leadership's codified and operationalized authority is represented in the submitted organizational chart and includes representation from both the Mills College campus and the greater body of Northeastern University. Other submitted documents clearly demonstrate the authority and institutional support needed to address the needs of all proposed educator preparation programs.

Supporting diversity and equity is woven throughout all aspects of NE:MC's proposed educator preparation programs, including recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty who represent diversity and will support equity and inclusion as a foundational tenet of the program. Each program is supported by the campus-wide Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Efforts include but are not limited to 1) recruiting through advertising in media that reaches diverse audiences rather

than relying only on traditional avenues; 2) connecting with professional organizations and conferences which focus on diversity; 3) providing multiple resources for faculty, staff, and students regarding hiring for diversity including recruitment websites, anti-racism resources, and racial and cultural literacy training; and 4) transparency with campus-relevant data about diversity and results from Northeastern University's own 2021 Diversity & Equity Climate Survey Report.

All full and part-time faculty in the NE:MC educator preparation programs will have relevant research, teaching, or administrative experience and will be matched with teaching and supervision assignments for which they have relevant professional experience. The job description for faculty lists among the requirements, a requirement for teaching diverse groups, as well as knowledge of diversity in society, the current context of public schooling, and the California P-12 content standards, frameworks, and accountability systems. Procedures and tools for faculty evaluations that focus on retaining only qualified persons can be found in linked sections of the Northeastern University Faculty Handbook.

At NE:MC, the credential recommendation process will have three components.

1. Academic success using the degree audit tool: This university-wide tool allows candidates, advisors, and the registrar to track candidates' academic progress. An audit can be run at any time.
2. Fieldwork success: Supervisors will formally observe their candidates six times each fall and spring and collaboratively complete TPE-aligned progress evaluations biannually. Examples of these forms are included in the submission. In addition to the supervisor, fieldwork success will also be monitored by program chairs and directors. The program director will meet weekly with supervisors to discuss each candidates' progress in their respective field placements. The specifics of this process will be reviewed under the next stage of IIA, Initial Program Approval.
3. Credential checklist: Each candidate will submit required documentation to the credential analyst as listed on the program-specific credential checklist. The credential analyst will then confirm all materials are present and all requirements are complete. Once this is done, the credential analyst will make the relevant recommendation to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

### ***Common Standard 2 - Candidate Recruitment and Support***

Across all educator preparation programs, NE:MC will use multiple measures to ensure each program accepts only qualified candidates. In addition to various required academic and state requirements, candidates must have at least 40 hours of volunteer or paid work in a school or educational setting relevant to their chosen program.

In order to recruit a diverse pool of potential educators, NE:MC will use various approaches including making clear its focus on equity and social justice on both institutional and program-specific websites; hosting events which specifically target individual groups; and accessing professional networks to reach out to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) potential candidates. However, they come to the institution, all applicants will be interviewed



by program faculty to gain insight into the applicants' personal and professional motivations and compatibility with the programs' goals of anti-racist, and culturally and gender inclusive practice. Once accepted, candidates will be assigned an advisor to guide them through coursework, fieldwork, program requirements, and assessments. Candidates will have access to support services through their advisor as well as a dedicated website (linked in the submission) and a student hub portal which is described as "a highly personalized, experience-driven platform that serves as a daily home base for Northeastern students and employees."

Upon admission, students attend an Admitted Student Orientation Session where candidates will receive multiple resources and learn about relevant support resources available to them. The multiple resources provided in the submission demonstrate how candidates are provided with appropriate information regarding support and how personnel are clearly identified and accessible to guide candidates' completion of program requirements. The process for monitoring progress toward completion is clearly explained in the submission and involves both regular collection and analysis of data, including assessments, evaluations, course assignments, and feedback from instructors, mentors, and site administrators as well as regularly scheduled checkpoints to review candidate progress.

In cases where candidates are identified as needing additional assistance, NE:MC provides clear policies and processes outlining steps to support candidates having difficulties meeting competency and performance expectations. One tool used will be the university-wide Faculty-Advisor Communication Tool (FACT) which includes personalized learning plans, targeted academic resources, and individualized guidance from mentors, instructors, and site administrators.

### ***Common Standard 3 – Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice***

To ensure candidates in each educator preparation program have the opportunity to experience issues of diversity affecting school climate, implement research-based instructional strategies, and work with a range of students in the diverse population of California public schools, the NE:MC unit will carefully select fieldwork sites based on factors such as student demographics including but not limited to race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, and first languages, as well as accessibility for candidates with disabilities. The Stage III submission links the specific process for site selection.

Candidates may have two field placements (one each semester) or a single year-long placement. Sites for candidates with two placements will be chosen to provide rich fieldwork experiences in diverse California public schools. Candidates who are in single placements will perform observations at additional sites selected to supplement their experience. For candidates where non-public school placement sites are acceptable, such as private P-12 schools, or early childhood institutions, these sites will be selected based on the same factors as public schools. Program directors and supervisors will work closely with the candidate and placement site to ensure candidates' field experiences align with relevant standards.

Site-based supervisors will be chosen through a rigorous process which results in the selection of supervisors who are credentialed, knowledgeable, and experienced in their field, and who meet qualifications defined by each credential program. Prior to selection for an interview, the credential analyst and program director will both verify the prospective supervisor is certified and experienced in the necessary specific content. Though supervisors will come to the role with significant and relevant experience, they will also be trained in supervision and receive orientation to their role prior to the start of the academic year. To maintain up-to-date best practices, they will also receive ongoing professional development.

To ensure the effectiveness of both the site-based supervisor and the fieldwork experience component of each program, evaluations of both have been included in the unit's continuous improvement plan. In addition to observations, professional reflections, and evaluation surveys, monthly meetings will occur, where program faculty and staff work to assess and better integrate fieldwork and clinical practice with coursework and program requirements.

#### ***Common Standard 4 – Continuous Improvement***

NE:MC has developed a comprehensive system of surveys and assessments to review the effectiveness of all aspects of each proposed educator preparation program regularly and systematically. The continuous improvement cycle graphic linked in the submission is a clear representation of this system. In the graphic, data sources, analysis processes, outcomes, and measurable goals are separated for the unit by the title "Across Credential Programs" and for programs by the title "By Credential Program." Included in the graphic are surveys and assessments for candidates, completers, courses of study, fieldwork and clinical practice, and support services for candidates. A point of notice is that, where appropriate, measurable goals have identified achievement benchmarks.

To create this continuous improvement cycle, NE:MC has modified the Mills College School of Education's previous three-year cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, and outcomes. The intent was to develop "... an improvement cycle that is more responsive to what we anticipate will be enrollment growth and possible distance learning options." The newly developed continuous improvement cycle has three phases:

1. Program term evaluations: At the end of each term, program directors will analyze program-specific data from course evaluation results, field experience rubrics, mean GPA scores, and summative for their respective credential programs.
2. Program academic year evaluations: At the end of each academic year, program directors and faculty will collaboratively analyze overall candidate admission, enrollment, and completion data, candidate development data, and surveys from field experiences.
3. Cross-program improvement plans: All data is aggregated and disaggregated as appropriate and is collaboratively reviewed by the faculty and unit leadership to provide valuable insights and recommendations to respective constituents.

The institution's submission goes into more depth by providing a list of data sources as well as specific information about the type of data to be collected, collection tools and methods, and actionable steps.

### ***Common Standard 5 – Program Impact***

NE:MC ensures their candidates will demonstrate the required professional knowledge and skills by gathering data on each student from a variety of sources. The institution will use information from practicum observations, field assessments, key coursework assignments including performance-based tasks, as well as feedback from site administrators. Another important source of information regarding candidates' professional competency will be the end-of-term summative assessments, which are linked in the report. In these, candidates, cooperating teachers/field supervisors, and program supervisors will each document their candidate's growth according to programmatic criteria and the Teacher Performance Expectations. These assessments will also measure candidates' proficiency in meeting the program standards and addressing state-adopted academic standards.

NE:MC will evaluate and demonstrate the positive impact of its programs on candidate learning and competence, as well as teaching and learning in schools serving California's students, through the following methods:

- Program standards alignment: Programs will assess candidates each term and track their growth to ensure they are prepared to assume full teaching responsibilities when recommended as educators.
- Graduate tracking: The educational unit will use the Alumni Survey and Community Partners Survey annually track completers over three years to understand how they develop as educators. Copies of the surveys are included in the Stage III submission.
- Classroom research: Program completers who return to NE:MC to earn master's or doctorate degrees in education will conduct research located in partner schools. Findings from these projects will inform the institution about the practice of alumni educators completing the research.
- Community partnerships: NE:MC is forming community partnerships with various organizations identified in the submission. The intent of these partnerships is to engage in educational research completed in local schools which include NE:MC program completers. Disaggregated data may provide insight into the impact of NE:MC programs.

### **Staff Recommendation**

The Board of Institutional Review (BIR) team has found the Common Standard responses to be aligned and Commission staff has found the Preconditions to be met. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission grant Provisional Institutional Approval to Northeastern University for programs on its Mills College campus.

Granting Provisional Approval would allow the institution's proposed programs to be reviewed by the Committee on Accreditation for Initial Program Approval in Stage IV. The Provisional Approval period would begin once the COA grants Initial Program Approval.

Staff recommends the period of Provisional Approval be set to 3 years. Each of the programs – Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject, Early Childhood Special Education, and Preliminary Administrative Services Credentials – are designed to be 2 years in length. Thus, after 3 years, NE:MC will have had an opportunity for one cohort to complete each program and the institution will have 3 years' worth of data which includes program completers. If approved by the Commission, after three years, a Provisional Site Visit will occur and the report from the Provisional Site Visit will be brought to the Commission for consideration of full approval for Northeastern University: Mills College in Stage V.

**Next Steps**

Staff will take appropriate next steps based on the Commission's action.