Update on Program Assessment
Professional Services Division
October 2008

Overview of this Report

This agenda item provides an update on Program Assessment reading for the Yellow Cohort and information on when documents will be received for the Orange Cohort.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item.

Background

Program Assessment is the part of the accreditation system that ensures that educator preparation programs are aligned with their respective standards. Each program is required to submit a document consisting of three parts. Part I demonstrates how the program meets each of the standards. The narrative should not be a re-phrasing of the standard, but rather an explanation as to how the program implements the standard. Part II is the course syllabi and faculty vita that provide the evidence to support the narrative in the first part. Part III is the piece that links the Biennial Report to Program Assessment. In part III, programs provide the background information on the key assessments they use to determine candidate competence. In addition to information about the assessments, programs also submit details on how they ensure that the assessments are given in a fair and equitable manner. That is, the rubrics, assignments or observation tools used and the information on how faculty or other scorers are calibrated to ensure similar scoring.

Yellow Cohort

Readers are reviewing documents received from programs in the Yellow Cohort. There are many requests for additional information as this is the first time through the process. Some institutions have been contacted to ask if parts of their document could be posted on the Commission's website as an example of effective practice. In a few cases, readers decided that the documents were not ready to be reviewed and should be returned to the program sponsor. This happened where a professional organization's standards were used that were not aligned to California's standards and/or when the narrative and the syllabi did not match at all. Feedback on completed reviews of documents are being sent electronically to the program coordinator and the dean.

With the first reading session, it became clear that different directions needed to be provided to future cohorts as they prepare their Program Assessment document. For example, in the original directions, institutions were told that they could use their latest approved program document and just make changes to that for submission. This became problematic for readers who were trying to figure out what the programs were before they could determine whether a standard was met or additional information was necessary.

Technical Assistance meetings for the Orange and Red Cohorts have been revised to ensure that future cohorts understand the importance of explaining how each sentence and key phrase of the standard is met and then providing evidence in syllabi and vita that substantiate the claims made. Focus in the Technical Assistance meetings was on looking at the standards to better understand the wording and responding accordingly. For example, if part of the standards indicates that "the program provides instruction in", then programs should write how they provide instruction (lecture,

reading, guest speaker, etc.) and then tell the readers where they would find evidence in the syllabi (course number, week's activity or assignment or reading, etc.).

The Yellow Cohort did not need to submit Part III as they had not completed a Biennial Report at that time. In the future, they will complete Part III.

Orange Cohort
The Orange Cohort has been asked when they are going to submit their Program Assessment documents, how many will be submitted and how to contact the program coordinators. Two institutions will be submitting six programs in September. Other institutions will submit in January. It will be important to secure readers soon as the bulk of the spring reading will be accomplished during site visit season.

Next Steps
Additional changes to the directions or information posted on the website may be necessary. The first reading in October will give a better indication as to whether the revised directions aided the writers and therefore the readers.

In January, an agenda item will come to the COA with a summary of the Yellow Cohort documents and recommendations as to how Program Assessment might shape their site visits in 2010-2011.

Information for the Red and Violet Cohorts will be shared early next year so they can begin writing their documents. In order to determine when programs will submit their documents, a request for submission dates will be sent to Deans in March with return information requested in May.