

Discussion of General Guidance to Institutions Regarding Program Impact Standard February 2017

Overview

This agenda item continues the discussion regarding possible options for guidance to institutions on Common Standard 5: Program Impact.

Staff Recommendation

This item is for discussion and information only.

Background

As a part of the streamlining and strengthening accreditation project, new Common Standards were adopted at the October 8, 2015 Commission meeting. In an effort to refocus the accreditation system on program outcomes, Common Standard 5 of the newly revised Common Standards now requires that institutions ensure that candidates meet the Commission adopted competency requirements but also that “The unit and its programs evaluate and demonstrate that they are having a positive impact on candidate learning and competence and on teaching and learning in schools that serve California’s students.”

Although the idea of positive impact is not new to institutions, evaluation and demonstration of positive impact is a new requirement for educator preparation programs in California. Since this is the first year that program impact will be required of institutions transitioning to the newly adopted Common Standards, the Commission is being flexible in the responses provided. However, as more educator preparation programs submit responses to Common Standard 5 and accreditation site visit teams prepare to review program impact during accreditation site visits, it is essential that some guidance be developed characterizing what constitutes positive program impact versus negative and what type of evidence is sufficient.

Although the COA has discussed this topic in the past in a very general manner, because institutions will begin submitting documents to the Common Standards soon and because Commission staff is beginning to think about the training that will be necessary under the new accreditation system, it is appropriate to revisit this topic at this time. What might be considered effective evidence that substantiates the quality of an institution’s program impact needs to be discussed in order to be able to provide the field with guidance on this topic.

Common Standard 5 Program Impact reads as follows:

The institution ensures that candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting state adopted academic standards. Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission adopted competency requirements as specified in the program standards. The unit and its programs evaluate and demonstrate that they are having a positive impact on candidate

learning and competence and on teaching and learning in schools that serve California's students

Questions to Consider

The following questions are presented as catalyst for discussion about the development of guidelines the Commission might provide to institutions as they prepare to report on program impact:

What would positive impact on candidate learning and competence look like?

What would positive teaching and learning look like?

What might be a benchmark of positive program impact or an indicator of "less than positive program impact"?

What type of evidence might an institution provide when submitting the Common Standards report due prior to a site visit?

How might an Accreditation site visit team substantiate program impact at the site visit and whether or not it is done "consistently," or "inconsistently."

A small group of individuals from a variety of institutions were invited to discuss these questions and this Common Standard over 6 months ago. As the COA discusses this further, staff will begin to develop guidance for both institutions and reviewers for the first few years of the implementation of this standard. It is possible that the staff could come up with a phase in whereas the expectations are for this standard are increased over time, with review each year about what evidence has been presented by institutions. This could help build a bank of knowledge and setting of common expectations for the future.

It is the expectation that this topic will be on the COA agenda for the next few meetings as it is able to develop a well thought out and comprehensive plan for addressing this standard.