

Discussion of Options for Identifying Program Exemplars

Overview of this Report

The Commission has indicated that they would like the staff, with guidance from the Committee on Accreditation (COA), to develop a process to identify examples of educator preparation programs that have demonstrated exceptionally good practice with a specific aspect of the preparation program. At its [May 2018 meeting](#), the COA discussed the topic of identifying programs that are doing extraordinary work in one or more areas so that other programs can benefit. This agenda item is built on the discussion held at the May 2018 meeting.

Recommendation

That the COA discuss the topic, and if the proposed plan to identify program exemplars meets the expectations of the Committee, to adopt the plan and direct staff to begin implementation.

Background

The standards adopted by the Commission set the baseline for what all programs are expected to do and it is always the Commission's expectation that all programs meet all standards. Some programs, however, go above and beyond these minimum requirements by devising and implementing practices for meeting the standards in preparing new educators that exemplify best practice. Such programs can be models for other programs, especially programs that may be challenged in an area in which the exemplary program excels. In this way, a significant opportunity exists to support and improve educator preparation across California.

Certain sectors of the educator preparation community have historically shared best practices in educator preparation across institutions; however, because this is not true for all institutions, the Commission could assist in providing resources for all programs by identifying programs that excel in program implementation and practice. For program sponsors experiencing challenges in successful program implementation, exemplary programs could provide significant guidance and support. With this in mind, staff is proposing for your consideration a system that identifies potential programs as program exemplars, who in turn could serve in a technical assistance role for other institutions.

Discussion

Identification of Program Exemplars

In an effort to develop a process that is both effective and equitable, staff suggests establishing baseline eligibility criteria for programs seeking identification as Program Exemplars:

Eligible programs must:

- Be from an institution having earned full Accreditation status from the COA in the most recent year (Year Six);
- Be offered by an Institution that was found to meet all Common Standards; and
- Meets all Program Standards for the program that is requesting Program Exemplar status.

After satisfying the baseline criteria, eligible programs may request consideration as a Program Exemplar through an application process that would be implemented by staff.

Discussion of Additional Potential Application Requirements

Staff has outlined below the possible steps in the application process for eligible programs interested in obtaining Program Exemplar status. Through this application process, potential Program Exemplars would be required to detail the way(s) in which the program provides creative and unique approaches to effective program implementation for one or more specific aspects of their program.

Once eligibility has been determined, a program seeking Program Exemplar status would submit the following documentation during the application process:

- A three to five-page narrative identifying the exemplary aspect(s) of the program and how these tie to the program standards with linked supporting evidence;
- Specific documentation regarding how the program feature being submitted for consideration impacts on teaching and learning
- A statement of endorsement from an employer (not the program sponsor) or completer (limited to two pages); and
- A signed statement from the unit lead and program director that the program agrees to be available to other programs seeking technical assistance in the area(s) in which they are exemplary.

Staff suggests that the application process be facilitated by a committee of program-specific experts comprised of representatives from the previous year's Program Exemplars (for the first year, staff proposes that three to five representatives from the work group that developed the revised program standards be asked to serve on each of the selection committees). The selection committee would review the submissions for that type of educator preparation program.

The final decision of which programs are awarded Program Exemplar status could be made by either this group or this group could make a recommendation to the COA for their determination.

Issues related to the decision process, whether or not the decision can be appealed, and what grounds the COA (if the deciding body is the COA) would need to deny the recommendation from the group are still to be determined.

Detailed steps for this proposed review process are as follows:

- Selection Committee is determined;
- Institutions with eligible programs are notified of the opportunity to request Program Exemplar status and the deadlines for submission;
- Staff collects the submissions;

- Eligible submissions are provided to the Selection Committee by Commission staff;
- Selection Committee members have 2-3 weeks to review all submissions;
- Commission staff conduct a conference call or Zoom meeting with the Selection Committee to determine specific programs for Program Exemplar status or recommendation to the COA;
- Staff presents the Selection Committee’s recommendations to the COA;
- COA grants Program Exemplar status to programs based upon recommendations or is notified of the programs selected for Program Exemplar status; and
- Program Exemplars are included in the annual accreditation report to the Commission in the fall of each year.

Staff recommends that in future years the application process be opened annually in mid-May and closed on August 1st with the Selection Committee’s recommendations being presented to the COA at its August meeting. For the pilot year, staff suggests that the process will take longer into fall 2018. The potential workload impact on Commission staff is unknown at this time.

Initial Year Pilot

Staff advises that the initial round of Program Exemplars be restricted to specific program types and be viewed as a pilot. By constraining the focus initially to general education teacher preparation and administrator preparation—at both the preliminary and second tier level – the process could be implemented and fine-tuned before expanding the option to additional types of educator preparation programs.

Each program applying for Program Exemplar status would identify the aspect or aspects that are working very effectively. Some examples could include:

- **Preliminary Teacher Preparation:** New Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) are being implemented, so a preliminary program might want to identify as being exemplary in how the program disseminates information about the revised TPEs to faculty, candidates, supervisors, employers, and other partners, or the program could identify as being exemplary in how the 10 hours of professional learning is implemented for cooperating teachers.
- **Teacher Induction:** With the new standards being a fundamental shift from the prior standards, a program may identify as being exemplary by showing its successful shift from the old to new standards.
- **Preliminary Administrative Services:** A program could identify as being exemplary by showing its successful implementation of the performance assessment in the PASC.
- **Administrator Induction:** A program might identify how Administrator Coaches are identified, selected, training, and monitored since the coaching is the key component of Administrator Induction.

Program Exemplar Expectations

Staff recommends that programs found to be Program Exemplars be granted the status for one year— the year after the accreditation site visit. A program that is granted Program Exemplar status must agree to be featured on the Commission’s Technical Assistance or other dedicated webpage on the official website. This webpage will include the Program Exemplar’s application document, other supporting materials, and contact information. At the conclusion of the Program Exemplar’s year, all documentation and information will be archived on the dedicated webpage for future reference and historical preservation. There would be no requirement that the program offer technical assistance past the one year when it is identified as a Program Exemplar.

In addition, it is expected that the Program Exemplar will do the following:

- Support similar programs by serving as a model for educator preparation programs in need of direction and guidance;
- Prepare a presentation for the Commission or COA to provide information about the program and/or to share about the outreach the program provided; and
- Agree to have a program representative (e.g. program coordinator or director) serve on the Program Exemplar Selection Committee the year following being granted Program Exemplar status.

Staff Recommendations

That the Committee adopt the Program Exemplar process described in this agenda item and direct staff to pilot it with institutions that hosted accreditation site visits in 2017-18.

That the Committee decide if it wants to have the Program Exemplars brought to it for final decision or if the Selection Committees will make the final decision with the information presented to the Committee.

Next Steps

Based on the COA’s discussion and any action taken, staff will implement the COA’s action.