

NCATE Speaker's Guide

NCATE

The Standard of Excellence
in Teacher Preparation

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

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Teacher Education
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Introduction

As teacher preparation and teacher performance moves to the fore in state, local, and federal policy discussions, the role, value, and effectiveness of NCATE moves front and center as well.

State and national policymakers are introducing new measures in teacher licensing to improve the effectiveness of teacher performance. Likewise, NCATE has moved to a performance-based system of accreditation. These steps will increasingly help answer the question, “How do we know that teachers know their content and can teach it effectively?” Questions are arising from a variety of audiences about the effectiveness of teacher preparation. We need to have answers.

This Speaker’s Guide was developed to assist you as you communicate with a broad number of public groups, as well as communicating internally within your own organization.

You will want to tailor your speeches to your audiences; NCATE provides you with facts, figures, and sample talking points for several basic groups; presentation pointers and public speaking strategies; a discussion of various print and broadcast media; and available resources.

All speakers should direct audiences to NCATE’s website, www.ncate.org, which features continuously updated information on NCATE and teacher preparation.

All of this material is for your use. Feel free to use it in any way as you communicate with your members and with other audiences. Please cite the original source of any magazine or newspaper articles contained in this document which you use.



NCATE's Messages

Messages help you communicate clearly and use the facts and arguments that each audience finds most convincing. They also ensure consistency since all spokespeople will be using the same messages.

Messages are necessary not just for use with the media but in addressing any audience, from one-on-one discussions with deans of unaccredited schools to addressing a large gathering of education stakeholders. Messages are used to develop tag lines and catch phrases and are incorporated into soundbites, talking points, speeches, and op-eds. The message is not only what you want to say but also how you want to say it.

One of the most important tasks when speaking in public, whether to an individual or a television interview reaching hundreds of people, is to determine who or what audiences you are speaking to, and which messages would be most appropriate for that audience.

The following are NCATE messages and talking points for your most important audiences.

General Audiences

■ The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education is dedicated to improving P–12 student learning by improving the quality of professional educator preparation. NCATE establishes high and rigorous standards for teacher education programs, holds accredited institutions accountable for meeting these standards, and encourages unaccredited schools to prove the quality of their programs by working for and achieving professional accreditation.

■ **NCATE is a lever of reform** in teacher and educator preparation. As institutions meet NCATE standards and evaluate candidate knowledge and skills, they are engaged in the reform of teacher preparation. NCATE helps create new norms in teacher preparation.

■ **NCATE's performance-based standards are state-of-the art.** They expect

- candidates to know their subject matter and how to teach it effectively.
- the college to have an assessment system that assesses candidates throughout the program of study, including the development of benchmarks that determine acceptable levels of performance.
- teacher educators to model effective teaching.
- candidates to demonstrate that they can teach students of diverse backgrounds.
- candidates to be able to use technology effectively.
- the university and the P–12 schools with which it works to function as partners who collaboratively design and implement the program for teacher candidates.

■ **NCATE makes a difference in teacher preparation and prepared teachers make a difference in P–12 student learning.** Study after study indicates that student achievement increases when teachers are fully prepared and fully licensed.

■ The public expects that colleges of education should be professionally accred-

ited and meet rigorous standards. A recent public opinion poll conducted by Penn and Schoen found that 82 percent of the public favors requiring teachers to graduate from nationally accredited professional schools.

■ NCATE is a partnership of over 30 organizations of Americans committed to quality teaching. The coalition unites teachers, teacher educators, policymakers, subject matter specialists, and members of the public representing millions of Americans.

State Policymakers

■ **NCATE is a resource** to state policymakers. State policymakers have examined NCATE's standards and have found them to their liking.

■ **NCATE standards are increasingly the norm** in teacher preparation.

- 28 states have adopted or adapted NCATE unit standards as their state standards so that all colleges of education are evaluated according to the profession's standards.
- The National Conference of State Legislatures issued a report that calls **NCATE a cost-effective means to upgrade quality in schools of education**. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future recommends that all schools of education be professionally accredited by NCATE or be shut down.
- **ETS concludes that NCATE accreditation helps candidates meet state licensing requirements**. A recent ETS study shows that 91 percent of NCATE graduates passed state licensing examinations. NCATE graduates significantly outperformed graduates of unaccredited institutions and those with little or no preparation.

■ NCATE recognizes that not all districts are able to find qualified teachers from accredited institutions. NCATE encourages states and districts **to make teacher qualifications available to parents**, and to use innovative staffing methods to ensure that prepared and **licensed teachers supervise those who are unlicensed** but are teaching children.

■ NCATE works with states via its State Partnership program to strengthen the accreditation of teacher education, while reducing duplication of effort and paperwork.

- **NCATE's partnership program saves time, effort, and expense for institutions seeking NCATE accreditation**. NCATE has partnership agreements with 46 states, so that institutions may seek professional accreditation while gaining state approval. State/NCATE partnerships eliminate duplication of effort and substantial paperwork for institutions seeking state program approval and professional accreditation.
- **NCATE/State Partnerships are flexible**, allowing states to choose the option that best suits their needs. For instance, the state and NCATE might work as two separate teams, but conduct concurrent reviews and share results. Or, NCATE examiners and state evaluators can work together as one team. A third option is for NCATE to conduct the entire evaluation, an option that can save the state and institutions a substantial

amount of money.

■ NCATE accreditation expects institutions to use multiple measures of assessment to determine candidate readiness for a professional role. NCATE performance-based accreditation uses results on state licensing exams as a factor in accreditation decisions.

Presidents, Deans, and Faculty Members (Higher Education)

■ **NCATE accreditation makes a difference.** It operates as a lever of reform for schools of education.

■ NCATE has received hundreds of unsolicited testimonials from institutions that attest to the value of professional accreditation and write that it has stimulated them to improve their programs.

■ NCATE's accredited colleges and universities are a diverse group, indicating that all types of institutions can and do meet professional accreditation expectations. Two-fifths of accredited institutions are private, independent, liberal arts colleges.

■ **NCATE accreditation is challenging, but achievable.**

Higher Education and School District Administrators

■ When you hire graduates from NCATE-accredited schools of education, you can trust they are trained to assume responsibility for a classroom on day one—not through on-the-job training.

Graduates from NCATE-accredited institutions:

- know their subject matter and a variety of ways to teach it effectively;
- are able to manage classrooms with students from many different backgrounds;
- are able to use technology as an instructional tool;
- reflect on their own practice and change what does not work;
- have had a number of diverse clinical experiences in P–12 schools and studied under a variety of master teachers during a coherent program of clinical education.

■ A study of new teachers in Kentucky indicates that over 90 percent of new teachers feel well prepared for their roles. The study also indicates that their principals agree. NCATE standards are a major contributing factor to these positive results. This finding contrasts dramatically with older surveys of teachers who criticized the preparation they received as being removed from the real world. NCATE has helped accredited schools of education integrate theory and practice.

■ **NCATE prepares teachers for the real world.** NCATE standards require accredited colleges of education to form true partnerships with P–12 schools and to engage the school partners in designing and implementing the program of study for teacher and other educator candidates.

- A recent ETS study, *How Teaching Matters*, finds that student achievement increases when students have teachers who are trained in developing higher order thinking skills, who are skilled at implementing hands-on experiences in the classroom, and who are trained to work with special populations. The study is an empirical validation of NCATE standards, as effective classroom practice and knowledge of special populations is required of candidates from NCATE accredited institutions.

■ America is experiencing a teacher shortage. School administrators may not be able to find and hire qualified teachers. However, administrators can make teacher qualifications available to the public. Administrators can also **reorganize staffing patterns** to ensure that prepared and licensed teachers supervise those who are unlicensed and unprepared but who are teaching in the classroom. We can staff classrooms with integrity, recognizing that there can be **different roles, responsibilities, and titles** for qualified, licensed teachers and for those who have not met state licensing requirements.

Tailoring NCATE's Messages

As you begin to design and implement your message, follow these general guidelines to help ensure that you communicate effectively:

Determine the Goal You Want to Achieve.

You need a clear understanding of what you want to accomplish before you start. Do you want to achieve a specific goal regarding teacher preparation in your state? Do you want to heighten the image of NCATE and NCATE-accredited institutions? Do you want to raise public awareness? Do you want to gain support of parents and the community?

Identify the Target Audience(s).

Think about whom you are trying to motivate or reach. Each audience will be persuaded by different messages. Your message should be tailored accordingly.

Is it legislators or other elected officials? Is it potential new members or benefactors? Is it teachers, administrators, the public? Is it the media – who can convey your concerns to the broader public and must be convinced of your point of view?

Research the Views of Your Target Audience.

As you begin to formulate your message, use survey data to learn more about the views of your target audiences and ways you might persuade them. Are they friendly or hostile? Are they looking for information to make their case? What is their history when dealing with issues of this type?

Review Past Media Coverage.

Past media coverage will tell you how the messages of NCATE and the quality of the nation's teachers have been conveyed and perceived by the media in the past. What does the media focus on? Confuse? Misunderstand? A good example of what the media frequently confuses is licensure and certification. Be clear when discussing each.

Examine the editorial and news coverage in your state and local media on key education issues. Note the terminology used, slant, key arguments cited, and quotes used. Ask yourself what works and what doesn't, and apply that analysis to your own message strategy.

Know the Debate, Know the Issue.

The more knowledgeable you are about your issue and how it has been debated in the past and in the present, the more creative you can be in shaping your message.

Use Facts to Support and Give Justification for Your Message.

Most audiences are persuaded by facts. Find those that will give credence to your specific argument and create a sense of urgency. Also, find those that will expose the myths about the quality of teachers in our schools.

Use "Real Life" Examples.

If you can tell the audience an anecdote about a real life situation, which they can relate to, they are more likely to respond to your message, such as how an influential teacher helped students turn their lives around or decide on college or an advanced career. A short personal anecdote or an account of an experience builds interest while providing unassailable testimony. Your experience cannot be refuted. Stories should be short and to the point. Stay on the story's main message so as not to lose your audience.

Study Opponents' Messages and Determine A Counter-Strategy.

Often, issues affecting teachers and education are seen to compete with other agendas. Be sure not to play divide and conquer. Show how your goals will help others achieve their desired results and improve the quality of the schools. You may choose not to counter an opponent's argument directly in your message, but you will need to be prepared to answer their charges and correct their factual errors in your talking points. Ask yourself what tone and approach are groups taking that may not support your goals? Is their approach working? Are they distorting the facts? Should your message directly counter their charges and correct their factual errors?

Brainstorm with Your Peers and Colleagues.

Take time out with other board members whenever possible to work out broad message strategies and also with public information officers so that everyone will communicate the same thing.

Develop Succinct and Quotable Talking Points to Help Summarize Your Message.

Given the time and space constraints of the media, make certain your message can be expressed in succinct and quotable sentences for the print media and in 10-, 30-, and 60- second soundbites for the broadcast media.

Pre-Test your Strategy in Small Groups.

Once you have developed your message, test it on friends and others not directly involved in your efforts. This will provide you with the informal equivalent of a focus group, and you can use the results to modify your plan.

Make Certain that Visual and Graphic Materials Coincide With Your Verbal Message.

Your banners, literature and buttons all send messages. Make sure all your visual materials complement and don't contradict what you are saying verbally.

Share Your Message with Your Political Allies.

It's important that your political allies understand your message so they don't contradict or weaken it. If you supply them with a copy of your talking points, they can even help reinforce your communication.

Stick to the Script.

It is essential that you follow the talking points you have spent much time and effort developing. Remember that these points represent carefully thought out and researched ideas. It's easy to get bored or tired with saying the same thing over and over again, but don't try rephrasing or reformatting your message strategy on the spur of the moment.

Don't Let Your Message Get Derailed.

Once you have chosen the key phrases and sentences you will use, don't fall into the trap of expanding or elaborating beyond what you have scripted. This is the surest way to derail your message. Reporters will follow your tangent or pursue an unexpected line of questioning, and fail to report the central point you really want to make.

Tips for talking points

Everyone remembers a clever turn of phrase, a vivid image, and a passionate plea. Offer useful analogies. Often, your audience will not understand what you are talking about unless you relate the concept to something they may know much better.

■ We pay more attention to the training of people who take care of our pets than the training of people who educate our children.

■ NCATE accreditation helps raise the quality of new teachers in this country in precisely the same way that professional accreditation of medical and engineering schools raised the quality of new doctors and engineers.

■ Trying to improve student learning without improving the quality of new teachers is like putting the cart before the horse.

■ We would never go to a doctor that knew how your heart worked but didn't know the right tool to use to listen for your heartbeat. Just like doctors, teachers need to know their content, and how to use the tools to communicate that content to our kids.

Use common sense. Restate the obvious in a new way people can easily comprehend

■ Good schools require good teachers. Graduates from NCATE-accredited schools are well prepared to be good teachers.

Use data wisely. Data is overused but can be powerful ammunition to back up your main points. Never use more than two numbers in a sentence and try to express your data in terms of percentages—50 percent, two out of three.

■ Two in three Americans say student performance would improve if teachers received more rigorous preparation.

Shatter myths. Just as records are made to be broken, myths are meant to be shattered. Don't hesitate to clear the air or set the record straight.

■ America is one of the few countries where teaching is not viewed as a true profession.

Stress the bottom line. People care about the results and costs, not about processes, possibilities, and plans.

Offer the big picture. While it is important to stress the key points and offer valuable examples and detail, make sure you don't forget the big picture. The "vision thing" is crucial to framing your argument.

■ Without improving the quality of our nation's teaching force, we have no guarantee that our children will receive the kind of education needed to succeed in this changing economy.

State your agenda. If you represent an organization, make sure you say where your group stands on the issues. Be clear about what you are trying to accomplish. Where possible, give a three-point list of major goals.

■ The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education is dedicated to improving student learning by improving the quality of teacher education. We can

do this by establishing high and rigorous standards for teacher education programs, holding accredited institutions accountable for meeting these standards, and by encouraging unaccredited schools to prove the quality of their programs by working for and achieving professional accreditation.

Ask for the help you need. Don't forget to make the sale and end with a plea for action. Say what you want your audience to do for you.

■ Audience of state policymakers: Graduates from NCATE-accredited schools are well prepared to teach the children of your state. You can help by strongly encouraging unaccredited schools of education to pursue high standards by achieving NCATE accreditation.

■ Audience of deans and faculty from unaccredited schools: Achieving NCATE accreditation takes an investment of work, and of time. But the benefits that schools receive from undergoing the process makes it well worth it: the strengthening of your programs, your membership in an organization of your peers who are committed to high quality programs, and the public's recognition that your graduates make the grade.

Public Speaking

Getting speaking opportunities

Identifying potential audiences.

Who do you want or need to hear your message to achieve your goals? Be sure that you develop a thorough list of target audiences. Check your list to be sure that it is diversified: educators, administrators, principals, school board members, professional groups, governmental leaders, civic leaders, business leaders, parents, etc.

Be proactive.

Don't wait for an invitation or a crisis. Be prepared to pick up the telephone and ask for an opportunity. Submit your own session proposals to your professional organization on the national or local level. Let NCATE know of speaking opportunities in your area. Even if you are not available, let us know and we will try to find a replacement.

Send a letter.

Briefly explain what it is you want to discuss, why you believe your remarks are of special importance to this group, how much time you would like and if there is any urgency to your request. If you want to reach as many groups as possible prior to the start of the new year, say so.

Make follow-up calls.

Every letter will require a personal telephone contact. Be sure the letter arrived and be sure the recipient understood your request. If the group has considered your request, do they have a date you might mark on your calendar? If the group would like you to discuss a different topic, what might that be?

Do a great job.

Remember, the average audience will be attentive for approximately 20 minutes. Keep your remarks brief, and take questions from the audience if there is time. The highest compliment is to hear afterward that the group wanted to hear more. They can always invite you back.

How to speak effectively

Get ready.

There is no substitute for preparation. A good speech is made up of great content and delivery, style and substance. To create both takes time and effort.

Know your audience.

Who will you be addressing? How many people will be in the audience? Ask the age range, educational background, special interests and activities of the group's members, and their potential familiarity with your issues.

Arrive early.

Be there early enough to watch the room fill up. Greet people you know. This will make you feel more comfortable and keep you from being shocked by a large crowd.

Personalize your message.

The goal of the speaker is to deliver information the audience believes it needs. Your speech must have value to the audience.

Talk—don't lecture.

Aim to be understood, not to impress. Eliminate professional jargon. Use statistics sparingly. Make generous use of personal anecdotes, examples, and experiences the audience can relate to. It is not the role of the speaker to prove how smart he or she is, but to communicate effectively.

Tell them, tell them again, and then tell them one more time.

It is important in oral communications to repeat key points. Tell the audience what you are going to say in your opening remarks. Tell them in the body of the remarks, the details or supporting information you want them to know. And finally, in your conclusion, tell them what you just told them—review major points.

Write out your remarks word for word.

Then read them aloud. Ask someone not in your profession to listen and react. Were you interesting? Did it make sense? Were you understood? More importantly—what was your message?

Rehearse.

Practice so many times that you have remarks nearly memorized. If you are able to become so comfortable you can speak from notes use only an outline.

Be ready for the unexpected.

The room or crowd may not be what was promised or what you had in mind.

Dress attractively.

Wear stylish but conservative clothing so the audience is listening to your remarks, not staring at your attire. Avoid bright white shirts or blouses that will reflect a visual glare under the lights of a podium.

Make the audience like you.

Establish eye contact. Share something personal about yourself—a story your listeners can relate to that leads into the issue.

Tell jokes sparingly.

Humor is nice, but few of us are comics.

Vary the pitch and speed of your voice.

Let your excitement of passion for the subject show. The most memorable or convincing speakers are those that speak from the heart.

Use your body.

Emphasize points with your hands, face, and upper body to bring additional animation to your remarks.

Use visual aids.

Use visual aids, but only if they add to the understanding or impact of your remarks. Dimming the lights can be negative, especially during a presentation following a heavy meal or during an evening session. Instead, have handouts ready that you might give to people as they leave the session.

Gauge your audience response.

Make adjustments accordingly. Beware of fidgeting and whispering. It is better to bring your remarks to an early halt and take questions than bore the audience.

Be brief.

In general, limit your remarks to 20 minutes. Most people, especially in the evening, have a short attention span.

Enjoy yourself.

You are prepared. You have an important message and mission. If you are enjoying yourself, chances are your audience is too.

Questions and Answers

How to handle questions and answers

The question and answer period is an important aspect of most speaking engagements. All of the hard work you have put into preparing your speech can be undone if you are not prepared for the questions of your audience. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when answering audience questions.

- 1) Set rules, i.e., “I’ll be happy to answer your questions if you can please ask me just one question at a time.”
- 2) Don’t ask questions back at the person who is asking you a question.
- 3) Don’t know it all. If you don’t know the answer, admit it and tell them you’ll get back to them.
- 4) If the question is destructive and untrue, shake your head “no” while the person is still talking.
- 5) Never have them repeat the question. If people can’t hear, and if it was a “negative” question, rephrase it, give the answer, then “bridge” to your message.
- 6) Tough questions: Give the answer, then break eye contact and turn to audience and “bridge” to one of your messages.

FAQs about NCATE

The information below is intended to prepare you for some frequently asked questions about NCATE.

Q: Is NCATE accreditation expensive? Too expensive for small colleges?

The cost of NCATE is little more than the cost of a well-run unit that can support its programs. Every five years, the institution bears the cost of travel and expenses for the three to six visitors from the Board of Examiners; this cost is about \$1,000 per visitor, or about \$3,000 to \$6,000 total. Each year, there is an annual fee, depending on the size of the unit; it ranges from \$1,400 to \$2,800. There are also reproduction costs and some staff release time costs involved in preparing the self-study.

Q: Does NCATE prescribe a curriculum?

NCATE leaves curriculum decisions to the institution. NCATE expects institutions to meet professional, state, and institutional standards, and the curriculum should reflect those standards. NCATE accreditation focuses on candidate performance.

Q: Our school has a unique mission. How will this be taken into account?

NCATE respects institutional missions and goals. NCATE does not specify a single way to meet a standard. NCATE asks the school of education what kind of teacher it is trying to produce, and to develop a framework for each program based on research and best practice. The school is expected to be able to articulate and defend its knowledge base as part of the accreditation process.

Q: Do small colleges have a difficult time meeting NCATE standards?

Of the 600+ colleges and universities in the NCATE system (including candidates for accreditation), 200 are private, liberal arts institutions, and most of them are small. This number includes over 75 members of the Council for Independent

Colleges, the Association of Independent Liberal Arts Colleges of Teacher Education, and members of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Q: What do institutions say about the NCATE review?

Each accredited institution evaluates the NCATE process and on-site visiting team members. On a scale of 1 (not effective) to 5 (very effective), the most frequent institutional rating is 5. During a recent round of accreditation visits, the overall rating of NCATE procedures rated a 4.65 out of a possible 5. In addition, NCATE receives many letters from institutions that have completed the NCATE review. All speak to the value of the NCATE review.

Q: Is NCATE a product of teachers' unions?

Teachers' unions are but two of over 30 national organizations that are constituent members of NCATE. Together they represent about 7 percent of NCATE's budget. We are pleased that they support NCATE. However, this is not about unions. It's about making sure our children have the best possible teachers.

Q: Doesn't NCATE dictate how many faculty, etc. a school of education must have?

No. NCATE standards ask the institution to provide evidence that the standard is met. The team applies professional judgment. NCATE simply tries to determine that the college is properly staffed for the programs it chooses to offer. Someone who teaches 5 classes of the same topic on campus is in a different situation than someone who teaches five different classes with one off-campus. Ensuring qualified faculty helps ensure quality teachers—our goal.

Q: What is NCATE's relationship to the National Board for Teaching Standards?

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is a member organization of NCATE. NCATE and NBPTS are working together to ensure that professional standards for teacher preparation are aligned with licensing and certification standards. This partnership is an important part of an emerging continuum of quality teaching, in which rigorous standards for teachers and students are linked to promote well-qualified professional educators for our nation's children.

Media Tips

Serving as a media resource

Establishing media contacts and relationships with reporters can help draw attention to the work of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. You can position yourself with the media as a resource on some of the key issues affecting education today—including education reform, and how NCATE accreditation improves the quality of teachers in our children’s classrooms. The more visible NCATE becomes, the more the media may call you for reference materials, guidance on their coverage, and your general insight.

You are an expert in the field of teacher education whom the media can use as a reliable source at the local level. Take advantage of news on topics of interest to NCATE and on improving the quality of teacher education. Let the media and community know you are part of the larger picture and that you can discuss the local impact of a national story. If a story is happening on the national level that has local impact, offer interviews, up-to-date information, and anything else that can give a reporter a fresh angle. You can actually make a reporter’s job easier. Who could walk away from such an offer?

It can be challenging to talk to the news media, present yourself as a resource, and gain coverage for NCATE. The fact is, the news media often rely on “resource people” for information necessary to do their jobs. They often want to hear from you. What’s important is knowing who to call, when, and what information to provide.

Know who’s who in every newsroom in your community

Call the news organization and ask. Sometimes the person answering the phone will have that information; sometimes you may need to ask for an editor (at print outlets), news director (at radio stations), or assignment editor (at television stations). Many stations, newspapers, and publications produce contact lists with names, titles, and phone numbers for in-house use, and may share this resource with you. Often a web site can provide this information as well. Don’t forget to check out alternative outlets such as ethnic publications and free weeklies that may be distributed in your area.

Look for people who care about education

At print outlets (newspapers and magazines), you want to start with the name of the reporter who covers education. Because of NCATE’s State Partnership program, you may also want to find out who covers local, state, and national government. Also get the name of the editor of the editorial page (you may want to request an editorial board meeting) and the editor of the op-ed page (the page opposite the editorial page). Sometimes it is the same person, but it is important to know for the submission of op-eds.

At radio stations, ask for the news director as a contact for routine news coverage and ask about any talk show the station airs that might be appropriate for a discussion of NCATE. Ask for the name of the show’s producer, when the shows are broadcast, and whether they are live or taped earlier.

At television stations, ask for the assignment editor and whether there is a reporter who covers education. Again, you may also want to get the name of the government or legislative reporter. Ask about shows that use live guests.

Make sure you get the correct spelling of every name, a direct line phone number (or at least a newsroom number), a fax number, and even an emergency number that allows you to reach the news organization if something happens

after business hours.

Print and broadcast media primer

Print media

The 1600-plus daily newspapers (“dailies”) in the United States provide an estimated 113 million individuals with their primary source of news every day. They usually cover a variety of education-related topics, including national and state education initiatives, elementary and post-secondary school education, and higher education. The better your knowledge and understanding of the kinds of education stories dailies typically cover, the more successful you will be both as a supporter of NCATE and in generating solid media and community attention for NCATE.

Daily newspapers have “editorial boards” that determine and write a given paper’s official position on various issues. Editorial board meetings provide a good opportunity to meet with editors directly, to present NCATE positions, to encourage editorial support or to discuss unfair or biased treatment of an issue. Call the editorial department to find out which editor generally covers education topics. Draft a letter to the appropriate editor that states both the issue and your interest in meeting with them. Include background information on NCATE, plus any contact names and phone numbers. Follow up with a telephone call.

Op-Ed/Opinion Page editors determine which op-eds will appear in the paper. Op-eds are the opinion pieces that run on the page opposite the paper’s editorials. They are usually 700–800 words long. Writing an op-ed is often an effective way to communicate your ideas and opinions about an issue.

Weekly newspapers are usually suburban papers, minority-focused papers, or rural papers that cover community-oriented stories or specialized topics. Most weeklies also offer a calendar of upcoming area events.

Many weeklies have a limited ability to send reporters to cover events, so often the reporters will write stories from press releases or interviews. Although the larger weeklies may have a reporter assigned to cover education issues, the paper’s editor or publisher makes most assignments.

Broadcast media

Because television demands visual presentation of your message, generating TV coverage about NCATE requires you to make your stories more “visual”.

Local stations usually have at least three scheduled news broadcasts a day: noon, late afternoon/early evening, and late evening. Morning coverage and local morning shows are gaining popularity. Generally, noon and late afternoon broadcasts report “lighter news”—special segments and human interest stories—while the evening broadcasts focus on “hard news”.

Cable TV is an extremely effective means of reaching large local audiences. Include cable TV in your media efforts whenever possible. Public access stations may have discussions programs you can interest in featuring teacher education, NCATE, and NCATE-accredited schools.

Typically, you should deal with the station’s assignment editor. Larger stations usually have three assignment editors—one for the noon newscast, one for both evening newscasts, and a weekend assignment editor. You might also contact your station’s education reporter or any correspondent who does human interest/soft news stories.

Many communities have a local access cable channel that relies on the local community for programming. That channel may already have a local talk show or news show that could be interested in talking about teacher education accredita-

tion. Alternatively, you could work with an NCATE-accredited school of education to develop your own local program about teacher education.

Radio talk shows and other broadcasts reach people in all aspects of their everyday lives. Using radio as a public platform can be an effective way to discuss the work of NCATE.

Radio programming offers a variety of formats for communicating to a number of distinct and different audiences. The most common radio news formats include: all-news, all-talk, news programs, talk shows, call-in shows, and public service or public affairs programs. When you mail news releases to radio stations, be sure to include a contact name and number.

The Web is probably the fastest-growing service available on the Internet. People or organizations create and maintain “pages” which users can call up on their computer screens. In your outreach efforts, mention NCATE’s web page (www.ncate.org) as a source for more information. If you have a web page, you can create a link from your page to NCATE’s page.

E-mail is an excellent way to communicate with NCATE staff. You can help put people in contact with NCATE by mentioning our e-mail address (ncate@ncate.org) to others. In general you should give the e-mail address as frequently as you give out our postal address. You would be surprised at how many people prefer to use e-mail.

Newsgroups are like bulletin boards that focus on everything from teaching to automobiles to vacationing. You can promote NCATE by posting comments to newsgroups in which you participate. Commercial services like America Online, Prodigy, and CompuServe have interfaces that make it easy to join newsgroups.

On-line conferences take place when a group of users all log on at once to trade information back and forth, in what is sometimes called a “chat room”. NCATE plans to develop a chat area on our web site in which moderated chats between the public and members of NCATE’s staff can take place. Also, check your service’s listing for upcoming live chat events. If you happen across an on-line conference that looks worthwhile, you may want to contact NCATE to see if anyone from the staff will attend (electronically, of course).

Delivering your message to the media

As an information resource to reporters, have on hand resources and information related to NCATE that will help reporters in covering stories. Information might include state and local action supportive of NCATE and teacher education accreditation, information on NCATE-accredited schools of education, summaries of standards and developmental projects work, and data on teacher education and how it affects student learning.

Be familiar with the types of stories each publication or station covers. This will help you answer their questions and prevent you from leading them in a direction that is unsuitable for their reporting style.

There are a number of ways to get your message out. The following section describes the purposes, uses, timing, and format of various media relations devices.

Media Advisory. The purpose of a media advisory is to notify the media about an event or activity. The media advisory should explain the “who, what, where, when, and why” of events and should provide just enough information to entice the media to attend. Media advisories should not be confused with news releases. Advisories are meant to persuade reporters to cover an activity before it happens.

Send advisories to your state/local media lists, which should include journalists who regularly cover education and other NCATE-related topics. If you do not have

a specific name, address advisories to the “Assignment Editor” at television stations, the “News Director” at radio stations, and the “City Editor” at newspapers. Also, make sure to send an advisory to state and/or local wire services for inclusion in their “daybook” listing of events scheduled that day.

Even if you know that reporters or news organizations are not likely to attend your event—because of time limitations or other reasons—send an advisory to let them know about it anyway. They may want to schedule a one-on-one interview or contact a wire service to cover the event for them.

Because an advisory sent too far in advance may get lost in the shuffle, mail advisories at least three to five days in advance but no more than a week, unless holidays will interfere with the timing. If you do not have this lead time, hand deliver or fax the advisory to local media no later than the morning of the day before the event.

A media advisory should:

- have a brief headline describing the event
- have the words “MEDIA ADVISORY” at the top left hand corner of the page
- state the date of release, usually the day it is to be mailed
- provide contact names and phone numbers
- visually highlight the date, time, and place that the news event will occur
- give a brief description of the purpose of the event and what will take place, such as a list of speakers, and be sure to underscore any strong visual aspects so they will know if it would be wise to send a photographer or camera crew
- try to keep it to one page
- indicate the end of the page by using the universal end-symbols recognized by news organizations: “-30-” or “###”.

News release. A news release summarizes and presents important stories to the media. The release should frame your message accurately and provide background information and quotes from reputable and knowledgeable spokespersons, including yourself. A news release helps to make a reporter’s job easier, which in turn benefits your efforts.

The news release should be written with the most important information in the first and second paragraphs. Less important points and expansion of overall issues should be included in later paragraphs. As with the media advisory, news releases should be targeted to specific reporters or to the assignment editor or city editor for distribution to the appropriate reporter.

If the news release is about a specific event or time sensitive issue and the information is such that it will take reporters longer to review and interpret, send the release a few days before the event and write “Embargoed until (date)” so they know not to use it ahead of schedule. Otherwise, indicate “For Immediate Release” on your press releases.

The news release should:

- be typed on 8-1/2 x 11 letterhead

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- have wide margins to allow for editor’s notes
 - generally be double-spaced and single-sided
 - be no longer than three or four pages, with a brief headline describing the story and key summary information in the first paragraph
 - highlight the release date and provide contact names and phone numbers
 - indicate page continuation by placing the word “more” in dashes at the bottom
 - identify continuing pages with a one word “slug” or descriptor followed by dashes and the page number
 - identify the end by placing a “—30—” or “###”.

Tips for writing a news release:

- Use short sentences and paragraphs
- Make certain that facts are absolutely accurate
- Check for proper spelling of names and places
- Avoid jargon and technical terms or explain them if they must be used
- Do not use initials without indicating what they stand for in the first reference

Opinion Editorials: Opinion editorials, or “op-eds” are submitted to daily and weekly newspapers to express the author’s position on a particular topic.

Write and submit op-eds when you want to express a policy-oriented opinion on events and activities of concern to you as a supporter of NCATE. Op-eds are good vehicles for explaining complicated issues—particularly when you are concerned that your message will not be adequately or effectively communicated through regular news coverage. An op-ed should express an opinion, but support it through facts, examples, and arguments.

Most daily papers have an op-ed review process that can take anywhere from one to 10 days. Many of the larger dailies will require “exclusivity,” meaning they will consider your piece only when they are the sole paper receiving it. Be aware of any exclusivity clauses before contacting other newspapers. It is a good idea to call the op-ed editor to see if they are interested in the topic and your perspective before investing the time in preparing the piece. During the conversation, explain why your views are important to their readers.

When there are no exclusivity issues involved, you might want to do a mass mailing to papers and include a one-page “pitch” letter explaining why your opinion should be published, why it is current and relevant, and how your information will be of interest to the paper’s readership.

A good opinion editorial should:

- have a title and indicate authorship
- be approximately 400–800 words in length. Check with papers in advance to determine their word count requirements

—be creative, but to the point. Editors like the use of vignettes and analogies, but want to first know what is new and important.

—stay focused—many op-eds are rejected because the author never delivers a clear message with facts to back it up

—include in parentheses at the end the name of the author(s), title, organization, and a brief description of NCATE.

Letters to the editor should be relied upon to respond negatively or positively to an article or editorial that a newspaper, journal, or magazine had printed on an issue or to communicate your opinion without going through the editorial approval process required for publishing op-eds.

Write letters to respond to editorials or to news coverage that is centrally linked to questions about NCATE or teacher education reform initiatives. Keep your eyes open for opportunities that may, at first blush, seem to be only loosely connected. Health, nutrition, technological innovation, business, and labor affairs may all have relevance to achieving the community's goals for education and accomplished teaching.

Don't expect your letters to be printed every time. Most papers have policies on how frequently they will publish the same writer's views.

A letter to the editor should convey the most important message in the first paragraph. If you are responding to an article or editorial printed in that paper, reference the title, date, and author of the original piece in your opening sentence. The letter should be between 100 and 400 words. Pieces that are short and to the point are more apt to be printed. Remember to include your name, address, and daytime and evening telephone numbers so the paper can verify who wrote the letter.

Many newspapers will print several responses to one article on the same day. It is not unusual to see letters to the editor regarding material printed two months ago. This does not mean that you should wait to respond. Submit a letter as soon as possible—usually within a few days to a week of a story's appearance. Check several of the responses in the "letters to the editor" section in your local papers to get an idea of the newspaper's time frame for printing letters.

Resources

1. Teacher Quality for the New Millennium: Summary Data (Research references included.)
2. *Performance-Based Accreditation: Reform in Action* by Arthur E. Wise
3. Testimonials from governors, presidents, and deans
4. *Better Teachers for Today's Classrooms: How to Make It Happen* by Arthur E. Wise
5. Description of State/NCATE Partnership Program
6. The Continuum of Teacher Preparation (graphic)
7. NCATE Making A Difference
8. Articles and Op-Eds

Summary Data

Teacher Quality for the New Millennium

The Issue

The 21st century will demand more of our students. The information society requires a higher level of skill and knowledge of all individuals than did the industrial economy, geared to factory production. Individuals should be able to reason analytically, solve complex problems, and gather and synthesize data. Therefore, student performance must rise to a higher level. As the society raises its expectations for student achievement, it must concomitantly raise standards for teachers. Teachers must be able to help all students increase conceptual understanding and analytical ability.

Yet every fall, administrators struggle to provide a qualified teacher for every classroom. It is an increasingly difficult task—even an impossible task in some districts. Administrators often resort to hiring anyone that they can. Teachers are often hired at the last minute, as bureaucratic hiring procedures create roadblocks for qualified candidates. Teachers are assigned to teach out-of-field courses in shortage areas such as math or science. Many legislators see nothing wrong with hiring anyone with a bachelor's degree. These policymakers still have the view of teaching as a simple, rote activity that anyone can do—no special preparation required. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future:

- In recent years, more than 50,000 people who lack the preparation required for their jobs have entered teaching annually on emergency or substandard licenses.
- Recently, 27 percent of newly hired teachers have not been fully licensed (U. S. Department of Education, NCTAF). 12.5 percent had no license, and 14.9 percent were hired on temporary, provisional, or emergency licenses.
- Nearly one-fourth of all secondary teachers do not have a college major or minor in their main teaching field. This is true for more than 30 percent of mathematics teachers.
- 56 percent of high school students taking physical science are taught by out-of-field teachers, as are 21 percent of students taking English.
- The least well-prepared teachers work with the most needy students. The percentage of unlicensed teachers hired in schools where more than half of the students are minority or poor is at least four times that of other schools. In schools with the highest minority enrollments, students have less than a 50 percent chance of getting a science or mathematics teachers who holds a license and a degree in the field he or she teaches.
- Widely differing state standards for licensing exacerbate the problem. Louisiana licenses high school teachers with six weeks of student teaching and without a major or minor in their field of teaching. Even with these low requirements, 31 percent of the state's new teachers are unlicensed. In contrast, Minnesota and Wisconsin require at least a major in the field to be taught, a semester or more of

student teaching, and extensive training in how to teach diverse learners. Their students score among the highest in the nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, while Louisiana's score among the lowest.

The Research

Teacher Preparation Makes A Difference

■ Teacher quality—knowledge and effectiveness—is the number one school based factor in student achievement.

■ Fully prepared teachers are more effective in the classroom, and their students demonstrate larger achievement gains than students whose teachers are not fully prepared. Fully prepared teachers are more effective than unprepared teachers in knowing how to guide and encourage individual student learning, knowing how to individualize student learning, how to plan productive lessons, and how to diagnose student problems. Fully prepared teachers have an in-depth knowledge of content and how it can be taught effectively so that students learn. Over 100 research studies reviewed in 1992 provide this evidence. (Darling-Hammond, 1992). More recent studies have confirmed these conclusions.

Clinical Preparation and Pedagogical Knowledge Is Crucial

■ *How Teaching Matters*, an ETS study released in October, 2000, finds that teachers' classroom practices greatly influence student achievement, and that 'more attention needs to be paid' to improving classroom practices. Student achievement increases when students have teachers who are trained in developing higher order thinking skills, who are skilled at implementing hands-on experiences in the classroom, and who are trained to work with special populations. The findings support the need for content-specific pedagogy, the 'how to teach' portion of teacher development, and dispels the idea that only subject matter knowledge is necessary in order to teach effectively.

- Students of teachers who conduct hands-on learning activities outperform their peers by more than 70 percent of a grade level in math and 40 percent of a grade level in science. Students whose teachers have received training in working with special populations outperform their peers by more than a full grade level.

■ The National Research Council published a report that indicates that teachers must be highly skilled in working with students to develop true understanding of concepts. The level of skill that a teacher must have to ensure student understanding takes time to develop. It does not happen overnight. The Council's study found that

- Teachers must be very skilled at working with students' preexisting and mistaken ideas about how the world works. Students tend to maintain mistaken understandings even after they have been taught a new model that contradicts the naive understanding. Research with young children all the way to research on physics students at elite colleges confirms this finding.

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- The model of the child as an empty vessel must be replaced. The teacher must actively inquire into students' thinking, creating tasks under which student thinking can be revealed. Teachers must be able to devise formative assessments that examine the understanding of the student.

All of these principles and data provides provide strong evidence that content knowledge alone, while necessary, is not sufficient knowledge for a teacher today. Clinical practice and professional study are crucial.

In addition:

■ Sanders and Rivers (1996) report data from Tennessee that show that two equally performing second graders can be separated by as many as 50 percentile points by the time they reach fifth grade, solely as a result of being taught by teachers whose effectiveness varies greatly.

■ A 1996–97 study conducted by the University of Texas' Charles A. Dana Center showed that

- Texas students perform better on state exams when their instructors are fully licensed in the subjects they teach.
- 75 percent of 3rd graders passed all parts of the 1997 state assessment when taught by fully licensed teachers in their field. 63 percent passed when fewer than 85 percent of the 3rd grade teachers were licensed. The passing rate for Hispanic 3rd graders jumped from 58.7 percent to 67.5 percent when their teachers were fully licensed in their field.
- One-fifth of Texas' K–12 students were taught by out-of-field instructors during 1996–97.
- The needier the school, the more likely it is to have out-of-field or unlicensed teachers. In Texas, 11 percent of teachers were not licensed in those elementary schools with poverty rates above 75 percent.
- Urban and rural schools hired more unlicensed teachers. Only 49.2 percent of urban middle school mathematics classes in Texas were led by licensed math teachers in 1996–97; only 68 percent of urban high school Algebra I courses were taught by licensed teachers, compared with 78.6 percent statewide.

■ Other data and studies support the Dana Center finding. Another Texas study [Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (1998)] showed that the influence of teachers on student achievement is many times greater than any other commonly observed variable.

Content Knowledge of Prospective Teachers

A survey of teacher preparation programs across the country (Feistritzer) confirms that 62 percent of these programs require a major or the equivalent of a major in the subject area of the license and 26 percent require at least a minor or the equivalent (1999). Individuals preparing to teach subject content are prepared in the content area. In addition, prospective teachers who teach specific subject matter take 70 to 80 percent of their college coursework in the arts and sciences.

NCATE Makes A Difference

■ An ETS study on 270,000 PRAXIS II test takers indicates that graduates of NCATE accredited institutions pass ETS content examinations for teacher licens-

ing at a higher rate (91 percent) than do graduates of unaccredited colleges (84 percent) or those who never entered a teacher preparation program at all (73 percent). (*The Academic Quality of Prospective Teachers*, ETS, June 1999). NCATE accredited institutions expect candidates to know the subject matter they will teach and how to teach it effectively.

■ The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future found that the most significant predictors of teacher quality are (1) the proportion of institutions that are NCATE accredited (the strongest predictor of the proportion of well qualified teachers in a state), and (2) hiring standards of school districts (the proportion that require full licensure, a college major or minor in the appropriate content area, and graduation from an approved teacher education program as the basis for hiring).

■ The ETS study *How Teaching Matters*, in effect, is an empirical validation of NCATE standards, as effective classroom practice and knowledge of special populations is required of candidates from NCATE accredited institutions.

What Can Be Done?

1. Expand teacher preparation programs in high-need fields.
2. Create federal and state scholarships and forgivable loans.
3. Raise standards while raising salaries and equalizing the financial ability of districts to recruit.
4. Streamline hiring procedures. (Darling-Hammond, 1999)
5. Apply truth-in-labeling to the teaching field; disclose licensing status of all teachers to parents/the public; use different title for those who do not meet licensing standards. (Wise, 1999)

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Performance-Based Accreditation: Reform in Action

by Arthur E. Wise

NCATE is not merely an accrediting agency—it is a force for the reform of teacher preparation. As institutions meet the standards of NCATE, they are reforming themselves. NCATE's expectations for teacher preparation institutions are a radical change.

Policymakers are searching for ways to scale up school and higher education reforms that are happening in small pockets across America. The U.S. Department of Education and private foundations fund reform projects at P–12 schools and institutions; some of those reforms take hold; others disappear once the funds are gone. The hope is that reforms that make a difference in student learning will be integrated into the culture of the P–12 classroom—and in higher education. Creating lasting change is a huge challenge. The advantage of the NCATE system is that it serves to institutionalize reforms. NCATE creates new norms of behavior around reform ideas and concepts in teacher preparation.

In NCATE's performance-based system, accreditation is based on results—results that demonstrate that the teacher candidate knows the subject matter and can teach it effectively so that students learn. In the NCATE system, it is no longer good enough for a faculty member or a teacher candidate to say, “I taught the material.” The focus is on showing that the candidate can actually connect theory to practice and be effective in an actual P–12 classroom. Subject matter knowledge may be assessed by PRAXIS or another content knowledge test, and this information will be used in the accreditation decision. But other measures of candidate content knowledge will be used as well. How well the candidate can synthesize the content to help P–12 students understand it is assessed as well.

In addition, the college must have a system in place to assess its candidates. This system must include assessments at entry, throughout the program and upon exit. Benchmarks for acceptable learning must also be set, and institutions must have evidence that candidates who are recommended for licensure have performed at acceptable levels. NCATE has established rubrics for institutions to use to help them determine satisfactory levels of performance, and will be developing additional rubrics in content areas.

Next, NCATE has provided leadership in aligning accreditation standards with licensing standards and tests. One would think that this alignment would have occurred long ago, but that is not the case. Licensing tests were not common until a decade ago, and they were initially developed by private companies with minimal input from the field. NCATE has initiated an effort that will ensure that the teaching profession's standards are the core of licensing examinations. This alignment will play out in higher education institutions as the institutions ensure that their graduates will perform at an acceptable level. The alignment will eventually provide evidence of the common body of knowledge that all teachers should know as the assessments are revised to reflect the profession's standards.

In addition, NCATE has provided leadership in encouraging institutions to redesign advanced master's degrees to incorporate the standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. This move is strengthening existing master's degrees as they revise their programs. New and revised programs will focus on improving teaching skills in specific subject areas. This dramatic and

coming change in master's degree programs aligned with NBPTS standards means increased professionalism and competence among experienced teachers. As more teachers become acquainted with the standards of the NBPTS, more will seek Board certification.

NCATE standards also expect teacher educators to model effective teaching. The traditional lecture alone is inadequate. Teacher educators must use strategies that they expect their candidates to use. Why? Teachers teach as they are taught. Teacher educators should model expert teaching.

In addition, NCATE standards expect candidates to demonstrate that they can teach students of diverse backgrounds. Many sessions on working with diverse populations have been held at annual conferences; institutions routinely swap information on approaches to recruiting a diverse student population and a diverse faculty; and the new standards continue the expectation that candidates should be prepared to help all students learn.

NCATE standards also expect candidates to be able to use technology effectively as a teaching tool. Just five years ago, technology was on the periphery of teacher preparation; in NCATE's 1995 standards, technology began to play an important role in the standards. In the past five years, deans have been preparing technology plans for their units; regional workshops on technology integration have been held; and institutions know that technology is an essential teaching tool—it's here to stay. Now, NCATE standards expect the use of technology to be central to teacher preparation in 2000 and beyond.

The clinical program in teacher preparation is changing rapidly, and NCATE has again served to help in this area. The performance-based NCATE system requires university and P–12 school faculty to function as partners in the education of teacher candidates. The higher education and P–12 faculty must collaboratively design and implement the program for teacher candidates. The emphasis on interacting as partners is far-reaching and profound. Cooperating P–12 teachers and supervisors have traditionally been treated as peripheral in the higher education arena. Now they are expected to be central figures in the planning and implementation process. A change in culture is taking place. The movement was started by the Holmes Group as it fostered the idea of professional development schools. NCATE has integrated many of the concepts inherent in the PDS into expectations for the clinical programs at accredited institutions, and is “mainstreaming” the reform.

A powerful sign that these concepts are now embedded into the expectations of the field is that the language of the NCATE standards has been adapted and adopted as state standards in many states. Many institutions are not where they should be yet, but the direction in which they are headed is clear. Performance-based accreditation requires organizational change and development on the part of all involved.

NCATE's expectations weave many of the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s into one piece of cloth—the concepts embedded in professional development schools; the measures of effective teaching in specific subject areas through the National Board standards; the alignment of licensing examinations with teacher preparation standards; making teacher preparation a “real world” experience.

Policymakers can encourage unaccredited teacher preparation institutions to move toward meeting NCATE standards as a way to ensure better teacher quality, and develop support and incentives for institutions to achieve professional NCATE accreditation. As more institutions meet NCATE's national professional standards, more qualified teacher candidates will be available, since candidates from accredited institutions pass licensing examinations at a significantly higher rate than do

those from unaccredited institutions or those with no teacher preparation. In this time of teacher shortage, encouraging schools of education to attain national professional accreditation will increase the supply of well-qualified teacher candidates who can improve student achievement.

NCATE Testimonials

NCATE receives many unsolicited letters from institutions that have completed the accreditation process. Following are excerpts from just a few of over one hundred and fifty letters NCATE has received in the past few years.

“Your accreditation efforts and your work with our Professional Standards Commission has been a vital link in ensuring that Georgia has the best teachers possible. Please continue to keep me up to date on NCATE’s activities.”

Zell Miller
Former Governor, State of Georgia

NCATE is not just an accrediting agency; it is a force for the reform of teacher preparation. I know first hand that, as institutions work to meet the standards of NCATE, they are reforming themselves. This reform will improve the quality of teaching and learning in our nation’s schools.

Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor
University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee

NCATE should be commended for providing leadership to create performance-based standards for teacher education programs. The implementation of NCATE 2000 will enable our teacher preparation programs to become more accountable to the State and should produce better graduates.

Lonnie Craven
Director, Office of Teacher Education
South Carolina Department of Education

Gail Morrison
Director, Academic Affairs and Licensing
SC Commission on Higher Education

NCATE has set high standards and carefully constructed procedures for the review of teacher preparation programs. Michigan intends to continue as a partnership state. The high expectations and guidance provided by NCATE have had a strong positive impact on the quality of teacher preparation across the United States.

Carolyn E. Logan, Director
Office of Professional Preparation Services
Michigan State Department of Education

NCATE’s new performance-based standards will help assure that graduates of accredited programs are well prepared and highly qualified. NSBA representatives are active participants in NCATE’s accreditation processes through service on its Board of Examiners. We believe that NCATE will continue to improve the quality of teachers to benefit our nation’s children.

Anne L. Bryant, Executive Director
National School Boards Association

Our teacher preparation institutions and others in the education community support the work of NCATE and appreciate the cooperative and collaborative relationship between the state and NCATE. In Kansas, we look forward to an ongoing partnership with NCATE.

Martha S. Gage, Acting Team Leader
Certification and Teacher Education
Kansas State Department of Education

“NCATE has been very helpful to Oklahoma Baptist University in developing a very effective teacher education program. Their standards and criteria are very appropriate measures of quality and effectiveness and the procedure for evaluating programs provides an excellent opportunity for institutions to take a thorough

look at personnel and performance.”

Bob R. Agee
President
Oklahoma Baptist University

“The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education has had a positive impact on strengthening teacher education throughout the United States. At Virginia Commonwealth University, the NCATE accreditation process has provided an opportunity for the faculty of the School of Education to review their programs against sound national standards.”

Eugene P. Trani
President
Virginia Commonwealth University

“NCATE, as the national accrediting body, serves colleges and universities through its leadership in assuring that the different sets of standards, (e.g., national boards and state-level licensing standards) are consistent and reflect the current need to professionalize teaching.”

Diane L. Reinhard
President
Clarion University

“On behalf of Gallaudet University, I am pleased to indicate a strong endorsement of the work of NCATE in its commitment to quality standards in preparing professionals for the nation’s schools.”

Kendall Green
President
Gallaudet University

“I am pleased to report that the accreditation process directly contributes to the quality improvement of our teacher preparation program. The standards, developed in concert with all elements of the teaching profession, clearly define the elements and processes of a successful program. The self-study review process provides the institution with a creditable procedure to assess program characteristics with recognized standards permitting constant institutionally initiated improvement. The external review permits both external validation of program strength and areas of needed improvement, but also assures the public of recognized quality assurance...At a point in the history of our country when education is of most importance, and the role of competent teachers central to the continued improvement of schools, confidence in the initial preparation of school personnel must be clearly assured. In my experience, programs participating in and recognized by NCATE provide such school personnel.”

Charles P. Ruch
President
Boise State University

“NCATE has been of inestimable value to our Teacher Education Program. We would not have the program we have, one recognized for quality, effectiveness, and excellence, if it were not for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.”

Jacob C. Martinson, Jr.
President
High Point University

“While the NCATE accreditation process demanded well over a year of pre-prepa-

ration, it caused all of us to take a hard look at our professional education programs and to respond to standards which reflected our strengths and weaknesses. The process caused us to make changes for the better. It also caused us to recommit to those areas of our programs that were working well. The end result was assurance that our programs in professional education were of high quality.”

Aubrey K. Lucas
President
The University of Southern Mississippi

“Since the initial accreditation, we have benefited by the ongoing processes of self-study and review preceding the continuing accreditation visit. Once again, the accreditation process has strengthened our programs and helped us to prepare high quality teachers, counselors, and administrators in a region in which they are needed.”

Norman Adrian Wiggins
President and Professor of Law
Campbell University
Buies Creek, North Carolina

“As we at the University work to provide the citizens of Rhode Island with the best possible public education, we are always cognizant of the role you play in ensuring that we fulfill that mission. I deeply appreciate the effort your accrediting agency expends to maintain high standards. Please extend my appreciation to all the members of the Unit Accreditation Board for their dedication and collegiality.”

M. Beverly Swan
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, Rhode Island

“I would like to express sincere thanks and appreciation to the BOE team for its individual and collective competence, thoroughness and consummate professionalism. Those of us firmly committed to the NCATE goals, standards and processes were honored to have been visited by such an exemplary group of professional peers. Our programs, faculty, and students surely have grown and benefited from our commitment to the NCATE process.”

Fred J. Condos
Chair, Department of Education
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana

“I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the excellent visit that we had and for the professionalism of all of the members of the BOE team. The data collection by the members of the team was thorough and the BOE report accurately reflects the findings.”

Dennis W. Sterner
Dean, School of Education
Whitworth College
Spokane, Washington

“The NCATE review was a wonderful experience for this School, its faculty, and its students. You should be proud of the wonderful preparation the team members exhibited and their general spirit of goodwill and professionalism.”

Corrine McGuigan
Dean, School of Education
Gonzaga University
Spokane, Washington

“We appreciated the professionalism of the Team selected by NCATE...we are grateful for NCATE’s leadership and vision. Clearly, the mission is a worthy one—

and one that must be joined by many if we are to succeed.”

Gustavo A. Mellander
Dean, Graduate School of Education
George Mason University
Fairfax, Virginia

“We found the (NCATE) visit and the resulting document to be professional, thorough, and fair. Based on my dozen or so NCATE visits as a member of a BOE team, I believe—and the reaction here is universally in keeping with my assessment—that this team was especially strong and effective.”

Robert C. Small, Jr.
Dean, College of Education and Human Development
Radford University
Radford, Virginia

“I am writing to you because the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education five-year continuing accreditation visit ranks very high as a positive and most beneficial experience for us. I am a strong advocate of program approval, which results from thoughtful visits under the leadership of NCATE. It seems to me that the visit this Spring was especially well done. The Board of Examiners Team assembled was highly qualified and conducted its inquiry in a most professional manner. As its leader, Dr. Martha Bagley was quite effective in setting the tone for the Team, which pervaded all of its work: a tone of competence and genuine concern for high quality teacher preparation.”

Bailey W. Jackson
Dean, School of Education
University of Massachusetts—Amherst
Amherst, Massachusetts

“Small as Niagara University is, the NCATE staff in the Washington office, yourself included, have always been most gracious in responding to our inquiries and in offering invaluable assistance during the periods when we were preparing for NCATE re-accreditation. Niagara University values its association with NCATE and makes no hesitation to encourage other small institutions to seek its accreditation. Its value is not just in the prestige it brings to an institution. It is the direction and assistance that it gives to an institution in its pursuit of self-improvement.”

(Rev.) Daniel F. O’Leary
Dean, College of Education
Niagara University
Niagara, New York

NCATE: Assuring Quality for the Nation's Teachers

“Better Teachers for Today’s Classroom: How to Make it Happen”

With the nation’s spotlight on improving preschool through grade twelve student performance, it is necessary and appropriate that policymakers examine teacher performance and teacher preparation and make efforts to improve them. States have implemented many reforms in teaching during the 15 years since the release of *A Nation At Risk*. Policymakers now realize that simply changing curriculum and even requiring more academic courses have not achieved the increases in student performance that they would like to see. The most important factor in improving student achievement is the quality of teaching—the teacher’s knowledge and ability to facilitate student learning. Extensive research studies of the past two decades have built a cumulative and compelling confirmation of what parents and educators have long known: the most important factor in improving student achievement is teacher knowledge—the teacher’s understanding of their subject and their ability to teach so that students learn.

While virtually all states have required that other professional schools be nationally accredited, only few have required national professional accreditation of all colleges of education. Those universities and colleges that place a high priority on preparing teachers have sought accreditation from NCATE. Others have not. As is noted in *What Matters Most*, the groundbreaking report of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, “although some schools of education provide high quality preparation, others are treated as “cash cows” by their universities, bringing in revenues that are spent on the education of doctors, lawyers, and accountants rather than on their own students. As a result, teachers do not always have adequate disciplinary preparation in the fields they teach or adequate knowledge and supervised practice to enable them to use effective teaching strategies.”

Professional accreditation has played a critical role in the standard of living we enjoy in America today. Much that we take for granted—from the bridges we cross to the health care we receive—is the result of efforts of professionals in various fields who produce and live by high standards. These standards surround the candidate’s learning and behavior from the earliest days of professional preparation—not just when a professional is licensed, practices in the profession, or applies for advanced certification as a specialist. Hence, accreditation of professional schools is a process intended to signal to the public that a professional preparation program meets the standards of the profession. Accreditation standards for schools are the bedrock upon which the established professions have built their reputation.

What does NCATE accreditation mean to the public? The NCATE “stamp of approval” assures the public:

- that the professional school, in this case, the school of education, has undergone rigorous external review;
- that candidate performance is thoroughly assessed throughout the program and before candidates are recommended for licensure;
- that the programs meet standards set by the profession and members of the public.

Who is NCATE?

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the teaching profession's quality assurance mechanism, setting and implementing standards for teacher preparation. NCATE relies on educators in the field and public members to develop rigorous standards for teacher preparation and determine which schools, colleges and departments of education measure up to them.

NCATE is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the professional accrediting body for teacher preparation. The Department noted, in its last review of NCATE, that "NCATE standards have clearly been formulated to serve as valid indicators of quality and the basis for consistently determining the educational quality of different institutions and programs."

Teacher education accreditation is similar to accreditation in the other professions. To seek accreditation, an institution of higher education must meet specific conditions. Once these are met, NCATE schedules an accreditation visit. The college prepares a self-study in which it addresses each of the NCATE standards, describing how the college meets them. Three to six members of the NCATE Board of Examiners then visit the campus to interview faculty and students, and to gather additional data to evaluate the program. The team writes a report on its findings. The institution may write a follow-up report in response. All material is forwarded to NCATE's Unit Accreditation Board, which reviews the data and makes the final accreditation decision. NCATE's procedures also include an appeals process.

NCATE is the profession, setting standards for P-12 teacher preparation, holding institutions that prepare teachers accountable to the public they serve.

NCATE enjoys broad support from entire spectrum of education stakeholders. The organization is a private, non-governmental, non-profit partnership composed of

- Over 30 national professional organizations representing over 3 million professionals (teachers, teacher educators, state and local policymakers, school specialists) and members of the public
- 525 accredited institutions (public and private, small and large) that produce two-thirds of the nation's new teacher graduates each year
- 100 candidates for accreditation
- 2,000 volunteer professionals and members of the public, and
- 46 states that rely on NCATE to supplant or supplement state review.

The Chair of the NCATE Executive Board rotates yearly among teacher educators, teachers, policymakers and school specialists. Who is NCATE? NCATE is the field—not simply a Washington, D. C. office. Its board is selected by the field—not by the accrediting body itself.

National commissions and organizations have recognized NCATE's leadership in teacher preparation.

■ The National Conference of State Legislatures recently conducted a study of NCATE and found the organization "a means for states to upgrade the quality of teacher preparation."

■ The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, chaired by Governor Jim Hunt of North Carolina, recognizes NCATE as one of the three quality assurance mechanisms in the teaching profession. The Commission

recommended that all schools of education be accredited by NCATE or be closed by 2006.

What does NCATE contribute to the field of teaching, and why does it matter to the public?

NCATE ensures that subject matter, and how to teach it, is a priority. Teachers must know their content.

■ NCATE standards require the school of education to base its programs on rigorous content and teaching standards set by professional associations in each content area. Secondary teachers must have the equivalent of a major in their chosen subject. Elementary teachers are required to meet rigorous content standards. All teachers are expected to gain a firm foundation in the liberal arts.

■ NCATE expects teacher candidates to work from a solid base of research and best practice. Professionally accredited schools of education are required to infuse the growing knowledge base about effective teaching into the curriculum. Accredited schools of education are vastly different from schools of education just 20 years ago.

NCATE prepares teachers for the real world. NCATE colleges and universities are expected to reach out to P–12 schools and enter meaningful partnerships with them. NCATE standards require teachers to complete a coherent program of clinical studies that gives them supervised experience in a variety of environments and with a number of master teachers.

Teachers must be able to teach the diverse population of students that make up America. NCATE is committed to preparing teachers to teach diverse students with diverse needs, mirroring American society today. Preparing teachers who are ready to teach all students is a part of NCATE expectations.

NCATE expects schools of education to integrate technology into instruction. In 1996, NCATE commissioned a national task force on technology and teacher preparation. The commission recommended that NCATE standards require schools of education to have a technology plan and to integrate technology throughout the curriculum so that new teachers understand how to use it as a tool to promote learning by students in the P–12 system. [NCATE implemented the recommendations.]

NCATE is on the cutting edge. NCATE is a leader in standards development and serves as a resource to states, colleges and universities, and policymakers.

■ NCATE has launched its performance-based system. Accreditation decisions now focus in large part on the performance of candidates. NCATE is leading specialized accrediting bodies in the development of this system. NCATE wants to know: what does the teacher know and what can he or she do? Can the teacher meet new, performance-oriented state licensing requirements? Can he or she teach effectively? Has the college prepared teachers well? Should it be accredited?

■ NCATE has produced standards for professional development schools. Professional development schools are cutting edge partnerships of colleges and universities and P–12 schools dedicated to the clinical preparation of new teachers, P–12 student learning, and the professional development of all teachers. These standards are moving the field forward in the area of clinical preparation.

■ NCATE shares standards for teacher preparation with states. Many states now use NCATE standards when they evaluate programs. States see the value in the

NCATE standards developed through nationwide professional consensus. Increasingly, states are delegating the job of reviewing individual teacher education programs, i.e., math education, to NCATE, while they focus on developing performance-oriented state licensing standards and assessments. These developments parallel the relationship of other national professional accrediting bodies to the states.

NCATE accreditation makes a difference. NCATE operates as a lever of reform. Its purpose is to stimulate institutions to grow and change. NCATE accreditation is challenging, but achievable. It is not a popularity contest.

■ In 1987, NCATE's standards and procedures were redesigned. The redesign put a stop to the status quo in teacher education. Almost half of the schools that applied for accreditation, and had been previously accredited, did not meet NCATE's knowledge-base standard, which requires that candidates and faculty use research as the basis for their teaching. Consequently, one-third of the institutions were denied accreditation. Those percentages dropped dramatically after 1990 as schools began to restructure their programs to meet the standard. No one knows where unaccredited schools stand today.

■ Beginning in 2000, NCATE ushered in performance-based accreditation. The focus is on candidate performance. Institutions must provide credible evidence that their candidates know the subject matter in their field and can teach it effectively.

■ NCATE is not a rubber stamp. NCATE accreditation is voluntary in most states. Currently, 76 to 80 percent of the institutions that apply for accreditation for the first time receive accreditation. Approximately 85 percent of those that already have accreditation receive continuing accreditation for five more years. About 15 percent of institutions that are accredited receive accreditation with probation, which requires an in-depth visit in two years to determine if weaknesses have been remedied. Institutions that are denied accreditation can and do try again, and many are accredited after weaknesses are corrected.

The Role of the State and NCATE

NCATE confers accreditation status only on institutions that meet professional standards. It is a status that all schools of education do not meet, and one reason why we cannot yet guarantee that each child will be taught by a qualified teacher.

About 520 institutions producing approximately two-thirds of the nation's new teacher graduates each year emphasize quality and accountability to the public through their participation in NCATE accreditation reviews. Approximately 200 of these institutions are independent liberal arts colleges and universities, many of them small.

The number of accredited teacher preparation institutions varies dramatically by state, from zero to 100 percent. More than 600 institutions with teacher preparation programs are not accredited; some are large; most are small.

Because NCATE is voluntary in most states, a few high quality and many low quality schools of education have not volunteered for review by NCATE.

NCATE renders a professional judgment about the quality of the school of education. It has no authority to close a school of education. The State is the authority that determines whether a school of education operates. States may choose to use the results of NCATE accreditation reviews to take action with regard to their institutions, and thus to upgrade the quality of teacher prepara-

tion in the state.

Does NCATE Make A Difference?

■ A study in Kentucky of new teachers indicates that over 90 percent of new teachers feel well prepared for their roles. The study also indicates that their principals agree. NCATE standards are a major factor contributing to these positive results, since 83 percent of new teacher graduates completing bachelor's level programs, and 94 percent of teachers completing post-bachelor or master's level programs graduated from NCATE-accredited institutions in 1996. This finding contrasts dramatically with older surveys of teachers who criticized the preparation they received as being removed from the real world. NCATE has helped accredited schools of education integrate theory and practice.

■ The largest ETS study on teacher qualifications to date concludes that graduates of NCATE accredited institutions significantly outperform other candidates on state licensing exams.

■ Accredited institutions provide unsolicited testimonials. NCATE has received hundreds of testimonials from institutions that attest to the value of professional accreditation and write that it has stimulated them to improve their programs.

■ Linda Darling-Hammond summarizes the work of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future:

In the past year, the Commission has conducted a number of analyses of the influence of teacher quality on student achievement. We have found that both before and after controlling for student poverty, a number of teacher quality variables are strongly related to student achievement in reading and mathematics on the national Assessment of Educational Progress, including a state's proportion of well-qualified teachers (those with full certification and a major in their field), the proportions of new and veteran teachers who are certified (positively) and the proportions who are hired without full certification (negatively). At the same time, the most significant predictors of these teacher qualifications are (1) the proportion of institutions that are NCATE-accredited (the strongest predictor of the proportion of well-qualified teachers in a state), and (2) hiring standards of school districts (the proportions who require full certification, a college major or minor, and graduation from an approved teacher education program as the basis for hiring).

Thus we see demonstrated a correlation between NCATE accreditation and measured P-12 student achievement. It appears that NCATE institutions prepare teachers who help students learn. This is strong evidence confirming the profession's belief that accreditation makes a difference not just for teachers but for the students they serve—just as accreditation in medicine makes a difference not only for the doctors but for their patients, and just as accreditation in engineering makes a difference not only for engineers but for the public—the users of the bridges, highways and buildings they construct.

In conclusion, NCATE's accreditation processes are intended to provide the same assurance to the public that professionally determined standards have been met as in other fields. NCATE's history is shorter than accreditation agencies in other fields such as law and medicine, but NCATE has made major strides to upgrade teacher preparation and expectations for what professional training of

teachers should be. Moreover, NCATE's moves to emphasize teacher candidate performance—knowledge of the subject and ability to teach—are consistent with the emphasis on results the public is now demanding.

Darling-Hammond, L. *Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence*. New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Columbia University, Teachers College. 1997.

NCATE State Partnership Program

The NCATE State Partnership Program was established during the NCATE Redesign in the late 1980s. The goals of the program are to integrate state and national professional teacher preparation standards, increase the rigor of reviews of teacher education institutions, reduce the expense and duplication of effort that occurs when states and NCATE conduct two separate reviews.

Colleges in partnership states can meet NCATE and state requirements simultaneously. Partnerships vary according to states' unique needs and circumstances; however, all of the partnerships are based on NCATE's high quality standards.

In all cases, NCATE unit standards are applied. NCATE and states also evaluate the institution's teacher education programs (e.g., early childhood education, elementary education, math education, school psychology, etc.). Institutions' programs in partnership states may be reviewed in two ways:

1) using the state's program standards and review process; 2) using NCATE's program standards and review process.

NCATE State Partnerships

The standards frameworks must now be based on candidate performance whether NCATE or the state conducts the program reviews. In addition, two new goals have been added to the State Partnership Program: 1) align state teacher education program and teacher licensing standards in the content areas with NCATE's program standards that define what teachers should know and be able to do; and, 2) develop a relationship in which NCATE and its state partners will collect and analyze data and information on candidate performance as a part of the state approval and NCATE accreditation process.

NCATE Partnership Conditions

NCATE State Partnerships under NCATE's performance-based accreditation system will require NCATE to work with states as they develop new standards for teacher education and licensing and information systems. The new state systems must reflect the benchmarks of quality embedded in the NCATE standards. In the past, the NCATE State Partnership Board (SPB) accepted or rejected a state's application for creating or renewing a partnership. The SPB will consider a proposal for future partnerships that centers on an agreement between the state and NCATE for achieving the new goals of NCATE State Partnerships. The agreement would include a plan and benchmarks for progress that chart the state's development of teacher education program standards and/or initial teacher licensing standards that closely align with NCATE's SPA program standards and an approval system sufficiently similar to NCATE's program review process for what candidates should know and be able to do. The state system should base its approval of institutions' programs on multiple means of assessments of the institutions' candidates' knowledge, skills and performance in the teaching field.