



*Inquiry, Evidence, and Excellence:*

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*The Promise and Practice of*  
***Quality Assurance***

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***A Festschrift in Honor of Frank B. Murray***

Edited by  
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*[W]e shall be better and braver and less helpless  
if we think we ought to enquire,  
than we should have been if we indulged in the idle fancy  
that there was no knowing and no use in seeking to know  
what we do not know.*

*Plato's Meno  
translated by Benjamin Jowett*



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## *Framework for Festschrift Essays*

The overall aim of this volume of essays is to honor Frank B. Murray's commitments to empirically-based quality assurance and to the development of increasingly effective systems of quality control in educator preparation programs.

As the editors approached the authors with the invitation to contribute an essay, two characteristic aspects of Frank's own thought were mentioned to provide overall direction to the collection. The first was Frank's consistent ability to see around the corner into the future; the present is of interest not only for its own sake, but for its dynamic possibilities. We suggested something of a 'future trends' orientation. The second characteristic of Frank's thinking that we noted was the knack for seeing the 'big picture' of issues and educational processes as they connected to small, immediate, concrete actions. We asked the authors to consider writing with a view toward identifying an important trend in quality assurance, quality control, or measurement, speculating on the potential consequences of the trend, and suggesting one or two concrete policy or programmatic actions that should be tried now. Each author was, of course, invited to follow her or his own muse. The overall idea, however, was that the set of essays, collectively, might suggest an agenda for the future of quality assurance and accreditation. We believe you will be informed and challenged by the provocative essays that follow. Each author has a distinguished record as a leader in higher education and quality assurance. The essays clearly are shaped by the particular perspective the author holds on quality assurance.

*Mark LaCelle-Peterson and Diana W. Rigden*  
*Editors*





## *Foreword*

What can I possibly say to capture as well as honor Frank Murray's career in teacher education? How does one underscore Frank's many accomplishments and his impact across the years, including his leadership of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) and the central role he has played in structuring the teacher education accreditation process of the future under the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)? These are the questions I have been asking myself lately on many of my daily morning walks.

As commonly understood, the purpose of a *festschrift* is to publicly honor a living person of undeniable achievement by presenting scholarly pieces related to the individual's work. (I can hear Frank right now chuckling and saying "Thank goodness she added the living part!") In the case of this particular *festschrift*, the included scholarly works are centered on the progression of accreditation, both in a general sense, and more specifically within teacher education, and the future questions and possible solutions that the field must address.

Frank Murray's career started with a dual undergraduate major in philosophy and mathematics (St. John's University), then included being a junior high school math teacher followed by a return to the academy and to his focus on developmental psychology (Johns Hopkins University) and finally to academic positions including a lengthy tenure as Dean of the University of Delaware, College of Education. Throughout his academic career, Frank has provided the

leadership for many prominent initiatives (e.g., Homes Group, Holmes Partnership, Project 30, Project 30 Alliance) and organizations (Piaget Society, Divisions 15 and 7 of the American Psychological Association) as well as serving terms as an editor of scholarly journals (*Genetic Epistemologist*, *American Educational Research Journal*). Each aspect of his career exemplifies the dual contexts within which Frank operates: first, the visionary as a critical thinker and, second, the teacher educator existing within a practical world. Those of us in teacher education have been the beneficiaries of Frank's career progression as he worked to alter our understanding of the purpose and outcomes of accreditation. For his efforts on our behalf, Frank has been recognized and honored and, as recently as 2009, he was named one of only 60 distinguished members of the Laureate Chapter, Kappa Delta Phi international education honor society. Yet with all of these accomplishments, I know that the honor we are bestowing with this *festschrift* will be one of great pride for Frank.

The authors of the essays in this volume have chosen their own paths to honoring Frank's work. For instance, Jon Wergin begins his essay by questioning how we go about recognizing quality and how we can publicly communicate the aspects of quality to others. While Jon is referring to quality within a programmatic framework, the composite works within this *festschrift* help to illustrate the essence of quality within the accreditation arena and speak directly to the leadership of Frank Murray. Numerous references are made to traits of Frank's leadership style as "visionary/futuristic," leading by example, and naturally inquisitive, but my favorites include Judith Eaton who presents Frank as "resolute in the face of challenges" and Don Warren who characterizes him as "deliberately rowing against

strong currents.” Perhaps all of this is best summed up by Dan Fallon’s pronouncement that “Rational curiosity lies at the center of Frank Murray’s being.”

Through more than a decade of watching Frank lead meetings, present the TEAC message, or work to change policy, I have found that Frank educates, informs, and inspires me each time he asks a question, reflects back what has been said, or expands the listener’s understanding of the issue at hand. Like the authors of this *festschrift* and those of you who have known Frank over the years, my interactions with Frank have increased my confidence that the teacher education profession will meet the challenges ahead. His role in the changing landscape of accreditation has forced us to confront ourselves (as well as our critics), ask the right questions, and find ways to publicly communicate the evidence we find to support our answers. I have no doubt that Frank would say that his accomplishments have been enhanced by the many interactions and collaborations he has had with competent professionals across the education spectrum. The talent, knowledge, commitment, and influence of each author in this *festschrift* are formidable. Each essay extends the reader’s thinking on the history, current state, or future of accreditation and each, in its own right, honors the life-work of our friend and colleague, Dr. Frank Murray.

All so often when one person is central to a new initiative it all seems to fade away when that particular individual relinquishes the helm, but the TEAC house that Frank and the other co-founders built has been based on Frank’s honest belief that teacher education had a story to tell and that, when programs are given the opportunity

and the structure to tell their individual program stories through the accreditation process, the entire field of teacher education would shine. To Frank's and the other founders' credit the structure will persist and the accumulating stories will continue. There can be no better way to extend our admiration and appreciation of Frank Murray's life-long endeavors than to honor him with the presentation of this *festschrift*.

*Sandra B. Cohen*



*Knowing by Asking:*  
*Frank B. Murray's Life of Inquiry*

— *Daniel Fallon*

Frank and I belong to the generation that came of age in the 1950's. With horizons expanding during a happy post war prosperity, our parents expected us to go to college, even though they had only the vaguest notion of what that meant. Both Frank and I accepted the role laid out for us, but neither of us was prepared to navigate the confusing process of choosing an academic future. Frank's perceptiveness allowed him to see the shallowness of myriad claims by competing admissions offices. He responded in a way that was to characterize the rest of his intellectual life.

At one of those frenetic college fairs in a high school gymnasium somewhere in Brooklyn, Frank noticed a quiet table in a corner and sought it out. The recruitment tool there was a filmstrip, even by the standards of the day regarded by most observers as a rapidly retrogressing technology. The first few frames featured a frustrated student at the college headed towards the administration building. Upon encountering the Registrar, the student throws his books on the counter, saying, "I'm tired of reading these irrelevant old things. I'm

not learning anything useful. I want to withdraw and I want my money back.” The Registrar proceeds to accommodate the student’s request, finding his records and passing him some paperwork. As the student, now a bit calmer, focuses on filling out the forms, the Registrar nonchalantly asks, “You said the readings are useless?” “Yes” answers the student. A short pause precedes the Registrar’s next question. “How do you know that?” There follows an iconic Socratic dialog that culminates in the student picking up his books and heading back to class.

Frank was hooked. He picked up an application and was enrolled the following fall at St. John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland. After graduation he taught Biology for three years to middle school students in the Baltimore Public School system. A Master of Arts in Teaching degree at Johns Hopkins University ensued before he was recruited into the Ph.D. program in developmental psychology at Hopkins.

Frank and I first became acquainted in 1985 through efforts to secure a grant from *Carnegie Corporation of New York*. I was president of the national association of arts and sciences deans, the *Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences*, and in planning the program for the annual meeting I included a session on the value of cooperation between colleges of arts and sciences and colleges of education in the service of strengthening teacher education. Sensing interest in this theme from *Carnegie*, I began to plan a grant proposal, but I needed to have a partner from education, so I approached the *American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education*, whose president recommended Frank Murray, then Dean of the College of Education at the University of Delaware. Frank and I conferred and ultimately agreed upon a framework containing five elements: (1) subject matter

knowledge; (2) pedagogical content knowledge; (3) liberal and general education; (4) cultural perspectives, and (5) recruitment into teaching of underrepresented minorities. We got the grant and launched an effort we called Project 30, named for the 30 universities chosen through a competition to participate.

Frank's contribution to the Project 30 idea became the seminal feature of the initiative. He turned the national meetings into variants of the analytical reading and seminars that characterize how St. John's College develops critical thinking. Provocative outcomes of intellectual inquiry, such as essays, stories, or treatises, were assigned well in advance. Seminar groups were then formed of no more than 12 persons each, which then explored the central themes in the assigned reading, focusing on their relationship to the enterprise of teaching and the education of teachers. Frank's advice to each seminar leader was to begin with the question: "What is this reading about?" Once these fountains of inquiry were flowing, it was impossible to tell which participants came from colleges of education and which from colleges of arts and sciences. Intellectual rigor poured from these seminars not only into the rest of the meeting, but onto the home campus of each participant in ways that resulted in significant reform at the participating institutions.

Rational curiosity lies at the center of Frank Murray's being. For Frank, learning is knowing by asking, and teaching is asking about knowing. It is his relentless inquisitiveness that has propelled his scholarship, enlightened those around him and led him into public service via accreditation. In 1997 Frank approached me about his interest in accepting an invitation extended through the *Council*

*of Independent Colleges (CIC)* to design an accreditation system. Addressing the challenge for teacher education Frank wanted to ask the question, “Can the program prove through persuasive evidence that its graduates actually possess the attributes and skills that the program claims it will engender in its beginning students?” Of course, Frank had zeroed in on the heart of the matter. This was not a question that concerned the then prevailing national system of teacher education accreditation, which like most accreditation systems of the time measured program inputs such as characteristics of entering students, size of library, claims for courses in the form of syllabi, etc. For Frank, more important was a question this approach seemingly ignored, namely, are the graduates successful teachers?

Frank asked me to read an essay on accreditation that had been written for a project at Columbia University (Graham, Lyman & Trow, 1995). The central thesis was that accreditation for postsecondary education was dysfunctional because it attempted to combine two contradictory purposes: external accountability and internal accountability. The former is driven by incentives to assure the public that the institution is doing well, and thus motivates it to stress its strengths and overlook its weaknesses. The latter is driven by incentives to help the institution get better and thus motivates it to gloss over its strengths while focusing on its weaknesses.

The authors of the essay offered a solution to the dilemma of polar conflicting priorities in traditional accreditation. Institutions should turn external accountability over to agencies outside of the institution, such as trustees, accounting firms, and state and federal agencies, leaving the institution to focus exclusively on internal accountability.



The mechanism proposed by the authors for securing strong internal accountability was a periodic audit of the institution's quality control procedures. The purpose of the audit, the authors concluded should be "...to determine whether the institution has in place procedures and practices that enable it to learn about itself, its weaknesses as well as its strengths, and to use that knowledge to address those weaknesses."

A problem in applying the analytical wisdom of the Columbia University essay to teacher education was that the authors came down squarely opposed to specialized accreditation such as teacher education. They asserted that incentives in specialized accreditation led colleagues to recommend such amenities as higher salaries, bigger operating budgets, more faculty positions, and better facilities rather than to root out weaknesses. Furthermore, such accreditation bodies practically never recommended withdrawing accreditation from programs in large recognized institutions, instead inappropriately putting pressure on smaller vulnerable institutions to change their missions. The authors concluded with an unequivocal recommendation: "The unit of analysis for accreditation should be the institution itself, not some separately designated program, school, or department." The authors acknowledged, however, that specialized accreditation was not likely to disappear anytime soon. This allowed Frank to focus on an inconspicuous sentence, "If specialized accreditation is to continue, it should shift its activities to strengthened internal reviews focused on learning." This became the germ from which sprouted the *Teacher Education Accreditation Council* (TEAC).

At his invitation, I joined Frank, along with a few others, for several sessions, each for at least a day, in which we explored how an

alternative “outcomes-based” accreditation system might work. Over time we settled on an approach that used as a model the guidelines for scholarly papers for evidence-based experimental journals, consisting of four parts: Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion. This became the foundation upon which the process developed and refined by TEAC was based.

Of course, Frank’s approach to accreditation of teacher education was driven primarily by his focus on assembling evidence and using reason to answer essential and central questions. It was an exemplary instance of knowing by asking. But his inevitable focus on outcomes has been happily reinforced by developments in the underlying political economy of the United States and other advanced economies. The United States crossed the threshold to mass higher education in the late 1960’s, and the consequences of larger amounts of human capital have been profound. Increasing the density of educated persons in a society produces unforeseen effects. It changes the rules of the game for everyone. As the economy began to produce wealth more from knowledge, information, and services than from the old mainstays, agriculture, manufacturing, and heavy industry, the nation’s spotlight began to focus on the production of human capital. Without increasing amounts of high quality human capital the new political economy will falter, leading to lower standards of living and decreased quality of life.

When higher education was the preserve of a relatively small proportion of citizens, logical and normative arguments to support the cause of higher education were sufficient. Academically elite students were selected, successful degree seekers were granted access to a curriculum that stressed historic shared values, and employers and

post graduate schools accepted the graduates with few reservations. But when the health of the political economy depends upon well-educated knowledge workers, the proportion of citizens attending post-secondary institutions is large, and the financial investment of society as a whole is at stake, then logical and normative arguments must be supplemented with empirical ones. The empirical argument that trumps all others is evidence of outcomes.

The reauthorization in 2001 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly called “No Child Left Behind,” is perhaps the most visible and significant policy initiative marking a shift towards outcomes-based measures of progress. Using empirical benchmarks based on standardized tests to measure “adequate yearly progress” of pupils in the schools was both a significant turning point and politically very popular. The bill passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 384 to 45, and in the Senate by a vote of 91 to 8. Not much later in 2005 then Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings formed a Commission on the Future of Higher Education, which called on postsecondary institutions to find ways of empirically verifying that their graduates actually know what the institutions assert to have taught them. The rise of instruments like the Collegiate Learning Assessment that claim to measure the value added to students by the liberal education provided by their higher education also reflects this societal demand.

Frank Murray’s leadership had already by the beginning of the 21st Century put TEAC at the forefront of the parade toward empirical verification of outcomes. TEAC was providing persuasive arguments for the validity of programs in teacher education. Not only the typically

small institutions represented by the CIC but also in significant numbers well-established prestigious research universities chose to seek accreditation of their teacher education programs through TEAC. Just as intended, the audit process pioneered by TEAC helped faculty, students, and administrators identify weaknesses they had been overlooking, clarified the central mission of the program, and led those responsible for the program to discover means to strengthen it. The positive program-focused success of TEAC accreditation led to enthusiastic endorsement of the process by teacher educators and gradually also by policy makers at the local, state, and federal level. Evidence of TEAC's success included not only approval by the federal government and the national organization overseeing accreditation, but also by entreaties from the older national accreditor for teacher education that ultimately led to a merger with TEAC to form the *Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation*.

Frank has pointed to the future of accreditation of teacher education by asking himself, "What have we learned through the TEAC experience?" (Murray, 2010). His answer is that assembling empirical evidence through audits opens up a variety of important research questions. Some of those can be partially answered by the evidence itself. Examples he cites include the fact that programs in teacher education are not "cash cows" for their sponsoring colleges and universities as is commonly and very incorrectly alleged, and, more intriguing, the hint that empirically supported success in teaching, what we might call successful clinical practice, is correlated at close to zero with any measure of academic achievement. Other recent research on successful and unsuccessful teachers appears consistent with this observation (e.g., Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff, 2009). The hints produced by accreditation evidence,

however, ultimately must be secured through carefully conducted empirical research.

The future of accreditation, particularly of the kind successfully developed by TEAC, is surely in fostering empirical research. The prevailing “research” literature on teacher education is deep and varied in normative propositions, reasonably solid in logical reasoning, and virtually bereft of foundational scientific empirical analysis. When Andrew Wayne and I reviewed more than 500 studies on teacher education for the American Council on Education in 1998 we found fewer than 20 that we felt were empirically informative (American Council on Education, 1999). Similarly, Wilson, Floden and Ferrini-Mundy (2001) reviewed hundreds of research articles on teacher education and found only 50 that they determined conveyed useful empirical information. The enterprise of teacher education urgently needs good scientific empirical research to clarify what elements in a teacher education program significantly contribute to preparing an effective teacher. Frank has given us an excellent example of how accreditation can give birth to a research program. Consider his observation of the seeming lack of correlation between strong academic achievement and successful clinical practice.

What TEAC accreditation has provided is a set of observations that lead to an intriguing hypothesis. Let’s assume, as we think about research, that it is true that measures of academic achievement are correlated at zero with measures of clinical practice. We begin with the fact that a zero correlation is not a negative correlation. Therefore, we could imagine a 2 x 2 contingency table in which the two columns were high and low academic achievement and the two rows were high and low clinical practice scores. A zero correlation would posit that

a random selection of novice teachers would place a roughly equal number of teachers in each quadrant. Which of these quadrants or columns or rows would we want to maximize as teacher educators? Would it be sufficient merely to maximize the entire row of successful clinical practice? If so, what would it mean for a pupil to have a highly successful teacher who was not academically accomplished? Would the teacher successfully teach the pupil wrong facts, e.g., that Theodore Roosevelt rescued the nation from the great depression?

Similar kinds of questions might be directed at each of the quadrants. One might assume that ultimately as teacher educators we would want to maximize just one quadrant: high academic achievement and high clinical practice. But empirical research often confounds us with facts that require further investigation. For example, in a persuasive empirical study by Monk (1994) the number of college level mathematics courses taken by the teacher served as a measure of mathematical knowledge, and scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress provided a measure of student learning. Student learning of mathematics increased monotonically with the number of courses taken by the teacher, but only up to an asymptote of about five courses. A subsequent empirical study by Rowan, Correnti, and Miller (2002) indicated that students taught by teachers who held an advanced degree in mathematics learned *less* than those taught by teachers who had taken fewer courses in mathematics. These are important findings for understanding the nature of teacher learning as it relates to student learning, but they could not have been persuasively revealed by logical argument alone. Empirical study was essential. Furthermore, these empirical findings call into question a generic normative and logical assertion that

teachers of subject matter will improve their teaching by completing advanced academic work in the field of study they will be teaching. The findings do not necessarily contradict this assertion, but suggest that important qualifications may need to be added. Before we can proceed to determine how to qualify the assertion, however, further empirical investigation is required.

In pursuing a life of inquiry through knowing by asking, Frank Murray has pointed us toward the importance of empirical knowledge. He has used that knowledge to foster a mode of teacher education accreditation based upon verifiable evidence. By bringing this mode of inquiry to the fore, he has pointed toward a future in which teacher education accreditation becomes the fountainhead for a new era of urgently required empirical research. Perhaps his academic training in psychology was congenial in strengthening his convictions about evidence. In a classic 1890 text, *Principles of Psychology*, the American philosopher William James mused about whether he could adopt different frames of reference when thinking about how he might be a person in the world. Each of these frames, James (1890, pp. 309 310) wrote, constituted a kind of “self,” providing the values and coherence appropriate to a complete personality. He wondered whether, for example, “I could be ... a great athlete and make a million a year, be a wit, a bon vivant and a lady killer, as well as a philosopher, a philanthropist ... and saint.”

His analysis led James to conclude that he could, in fact, only be who he actually was. If he had different “selves,” he reasoned, they could only be empirically defined, that is, by the words and deeds that he himself professed. And so he arrived at the conclusion that “I am often confronted by the necessity of standing by one of my empirical

selves and relinquishing the rest...all other selves thereupon become unreal, but the fortunes of this self are real. Its failures are real failures, its triumphs real triumphs....” For Frank Murray, an empirical self is his real self, and it has enriched us all with a multitude of pregnant questions.

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## *Time, Our Times, and TEAC*

— Donald Warren

Of the relevant disciplines, history, possibly only history, can adequately explain Frank Murray's significance within the Teacher Education Accreditation Council and research on intentional teacher preparation generally. It illuminates TEAC advances that otherwise could be missed, a composite policy and practice trajectory launched by ideas Frank fashioned, tested, and refined across a decade. Expanding the point, one might argue that history offers the most trustworthy avenue to understanding program quality, despite obvious limitations. Like any framework for investigating program performance, the historical perspective is context-driven, unstable, and fails validity and reliability tests with the passage of time. Certainly, history is the approach most deeply embedded in TEAC principles. All their leading questions about programs (*What have teacher candidates learned? How do faculty know their program is effective? What have they and their institutions learned from their successes and failures? What evidence suggests they have amended their program accordingly?*) evoke varieties of past evidence. In some cases faculty claim a need to visit anew their program's origins and those of the college or university itself. Reconstructions of institutional and program development are not merely fillers in a self-study document,

and are definitely much more than exercises in nostalgia. They are searches for documentation of the inevitable serial battles over change and purpose. That self-professed track record of cultural devolution and achievement lends confidence in a program. The story is always mixed, never simply linear or progressive. Whatever its direction, the history provides empirical encouragement as faculty and institutions struggle with the ravages of time and circumstance: fluctuating budgets; aging structures and technologies; faculty and staff turnover; shifting student identities; altering local, state, and federal policies; and varying social and cultural dynamics, arenas in and through which schools and teachers operate and, for good or ill, leave their marks. The inevitability of change sharpens the urgency of TEAC's purposes, unsettles program confidence, even if belatedly, and impels historical orientations, assuming the aim is teacher education and not training alone. TEAC intends to promote programs embedded in pervasive, untimid curiosity, a culture of inquiry satisfied by evidence, however unsettling initially. Toward this imperative, Frank Murray repeatedly has grasped high expectations, pushing others so inclined to reach farther still. Understood as reconstructed momentum, a running start on the present, history delivers a useful way to honor his achievements and TEAC's.

He, and TEAC itself, often and deliberately rowed against strong currents. Teacher preparation traditions in the United States and elsewhere have long revealed a weakness for fads, status envy, and depleted metaphors, all at the expense of commitments to independent foresight and grounded outcomes. The longing for homogeneity, visible in the one-best-system mentality dominating school and teacher preparation reform, can be traced to demographic origins, the Jeffersonian ideal of an agricultural society (Lauzon 2011).

Bureaucracy, the Progressive Era's organizational reform platform, meshed smoothly with the rural ethos and thus propelled uniformity as desirable policy (Labaree 1997).

Institutionalized, the inclinations infected other professional fields as well. For one, look to U.S. law schools. The crisis in American legal preparation recently announced by editors of *The New York Times* (2011, 26 November) accuses law schools of being mired “in an outdated instructional and business model” (p. A16). As Daniel T. Rodgers argues in *Age of Fracture* (2011), this stubborn inertia stems from an addiction to either-or thinking. It mirrors precisely our age of fracture formed by social and intellectual atomization, and the dangerous failure to appreciate the educative magic of purposes and words. We need law schools, *The Times* editorialized, that can organize themselves, deliver instruction, and in short think in the future tense “to align what and how they teach to what legal practice now entails and what individuals and institutions need – like many more lawyers who can serve as advocates of the poor and middle class” (p. A16). By implication, advocacy roles of any sort lack political capital in an age of fracture, a contemporary mood inhibitor of reform options the editors overlook. Nevertheless, they soldier on. In addition to advocates and counselors, they propose, American society needs lawyers well prepared for multiple other future roles as “negotiators and deal-shapers, and problem solvers.” To these ends, according to *The Times*, we need law schools rigorously committed to both-and modes of inclusive and open-ended planning, teaching, research, and organization. Key to success will be effective teaching, theory and practice wed, with all the intimacy the verb implies, and ideas and skills tightly laced.

Such goals remain problematic when confrontation, competition, and markets delimit language and possibility. Our reigning ideals, constituting ways of thinking, nothing more or less, seek winners, losers, and other fragments, rather than the unifying diversities of teaching and learning. Market metaphors, Rodgers (2011) observes, now lie unquestioned yet explicit in scholarly discourse, political rhetoric, media punditry, and even happy hour chats. Wall Street enterprises and universities alike seek “branding” advantages. He blames the intellectual retreat of economics, the dismal science, for the ironic development. Market metaphors snap cultural glue, raising individualization as a façade covering a contemporary manifestation of group thinking, our version of the herd instinct. We do not know yet how to back out of this cul-de-sac, Rodgers warns, but to synchronize creativity and intellectual rigor and advance them in the education of the public, we urgently need to try.

Do similarly alienating modes of thought constrain teacher education and imply a research agenda of new business? If so, accreditors should be asking whether teacher preparation ought to be more out of joint with its times, not scampering to echo the language of exclusion. The repetitious character of its reform history suggests deep-seated habits: a rocky career of recycled initiatives and persistent social conformity, hints of systemic pathological obedience. Unreliable funding levels and governance structures arranged primarily by accretion help explain both. From the outset, teacher work and preparation were linked through policy and practice, even when they hardly met. The story began over three centuries ago at colonial colleges like Harvard (arguably the nation’s first teacher preparation institution) and the academies whose histories Ted Sizer (1964) traced. Graduates or young men pausing in their studies

to contemplate what they wanted to do with their lives sometimes agreed to become schoolmasters. Typically, they did not last long, the job proving ill-suited to reflection. Such was the painful discovery of John Adams (Harvard) and Henry Barnard (Yale), two well-known temporary teachers. Both famously landed in politics, the former by design and the latter as the accidental first United States Commissioner of Education (MacMullen 1991). One of Adams' charges recalled he seemed "absorbed" and given to much frowning (McCullough 2001, p. 38). Worth noting, the colleges and academies offered no programs for future teachers. Rather, a common assumption intervened, namely that anyone with an academic foundation, however incomplete, could handle a classroom and the prevailing school curriculum.

As schools evolved in the nineteenth century, so did their isolation by institutional type, erecting conceptual and policy silos straining developmental links among common schools, high schools, colleges, and later universities. The introduction of kindergartens and junior high schools as separate (but not equal) professional and research fields blurred organizational lines but left the bureaucratic maze intact (Garrison 2006). Categorizations of teachers by assignment, salary, and status followed suit. High school teachers migrated from colleges and academies, which still lacked preparation programs; common school teachers tended to bring that level of preparation to their classrooms. In both cases, local school committees, citizens, and parents exerted control, taking stock of whether a teacher delivered the goods. Two general criteria tended to be applied, student behavior and rote learning, the latter proven by written tests, recitations, and classroom observations conducted by committees, parents, and occasional observers. Spelling bees and public oral quizzes displayed young scholars' achievements. These intensely local arrangements left

a potential dysfunction unaddressed. Could they satisfy the republic's need for literate, informed citizens? Yes, they could, but only within narrow variations among schooling opportunities locally. The concern inspired antebellum efforts to establish county supervisory structures and state agencies to broaden the scope of local control, but these developments occurred primarily in northern and western states, North Carolina being a notable exception. In the 1860s, the trend moved to the federal level. The Civil War, Louis Menand (2001) observes, permitted policy debates, as over against sentimental ruminations, on a national system of schooling, proffering a new political entity, government by a federal partnership to collate local, state, and national responsibilities, not by competing levels of power.

Similar constraints shaped the beginnings of formal teacher preparation. Early on, teacher seminaries emerged to offer training for candidates headed to common schools. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, high schools in large to midsize cities expanded their still forming curricula to include teacher preparation. These several institutional types morphed into private, usually sectarian, and state institutions and then into normal or pedagogical colleges. Throughout this period, one should remember, the majority of elementary teachers brought little to no preservice preparation to their first jobs. With contracts secured, they acquired inservice training via summer institutes and periodic enrollment at a nearby institution. Money was a problem, or more precisely foregone earnings. Teacher salaries were too low to foster financial incentives for preservice matriculation. Not until the 1950s did the majority of American teachers hold bachelor degrees (Rury 1989; Sedlak 1989).

This abbreviated sketch suggests linear growth, following the

predictable arc of modernization. Teacher preparation programs became longer and more detailed; normal schools became degree granting four-year colleges and later regional universities. Their status, effectiveness, and efficacy, however, seemed locked in first gear. In a detailed comprehensive survey, Teachers College's Edward S. Evenden (1933) found no reliable research that helped cull failed teacher preparation programs from successful models. A key reason, he surmised, was their uniformity. In actuality there was only one model; all were essentially alike, with curricula trending toward practical training. Over the next six or so decades, studies attempting to crown particular programs or even just those with national accreditation failed credibility tests, outcomes traceable to designs contaminated by halo effects. Missing after all these years, a culture of inquiry had yet to take root to nurture teacher preparation with educative potential. Programs, and the faculties who offered them, still struggled for respect and funding within their home institutions, from state legislatures and agencies, and from private donors. Here too modernization in the cause of national standards and "excellence" reinforced trends toward uniformity. For almost two centuries, from the time they first took notice, a recurring theme in news media has reported a story of ineptitude and low expectations (Labaree 1997). In recent years, broadsides from the U.S. Department of Education have joined the chorus of negative claims. This was the situation TEAC and Frank Murray entered, an intellectual and professional void nonetheless packed to the brim with other phenomena.

Whether as heroes or scapegoats, fictionalized portrayals of teachers confirm disparaging popular and scholarly views of actual teachers. They appear as selfless, philanthropic, passive creatures,

lacking human nuance and spirit. Perhaps the job attracts docile personalities which no amount of training can unbend. More likely, some scholars argue, teaching became women's work and bore the stain of women's historically low social status (Clifford 1989; Rury 1989). They could also be paid lower salaries than men could, a significant factor in calculations. The problem with this interpretation is that it ignores the liberation nineteenth-century women experienced in becoming teachers (Clifford 1989). A similar point can be made regarding the educational effects of teaching for African Americans and American Indians over the past century (Lawrence 2011). In these three instances teaching and teacher preparation have functioned as triggers of educative cultural dynamics. Some values, it turns out, elude quantification and even perceptive literary imaginations. That possibility points to another explanation of the longstanding derogatory treatment of teachers and teacher preparation. Perhaps it stems from a blended problem of misperception and mismeasurement, both errors attributable to a discouraging characteristic: As published, the history of teachers and teacher preparation lacks interest (Ogren 2005). A dull, repetitious, and culturally insignificant story forms. Following in the footsteps of John Adams and Henry Barnard, most teachers come and go. They exit after three to five years, leaving little discernible imprint on students or schools (Labaree 2004; Evenden 1933). The careers of African American and American Indian teachers, as examples, require longer, more nuanced narratives.

Cautioning against studies with too much data and not enough insight, historical and sociological analyses tend to agree that intentional teacher preparation, like the reigning perception of the profession it feeds, may have changed quantitatively but not structurally or essentially (Labaree 2004; Ogren 2005). From the



early nineteenth century onwards, it has emanated from a stark dichotomy between subject matter and teaching methods. Twentieth century attempts to amass a research base for teacher preparation have only underscored the unnatural division between content and pedagogy, as though biology, or history, can be learned without simultaneously learning what knowledge is of most worth, how knowledge is acquired, and how it can be passed on to students. Willy-nilly, deliberately or not, mathematics departments deliver lessons in instructional methods. The reverse is true of the much maligned methods and student teacher courses that anchor teacher preparation programs. Math methods inevitably also teach mathematics and the discipline's value. Divorced from content, classroom management becomes lessons in how to police students, an abstract and temporary arsenal at best. In the world of schools and classrooms, content and pedagogy are interwoven realities, a tapestry of sorts. The resolution of the conceptual and curriculum planning dilemma is not to reduce or eliminate one or the other focus but to insist on maintaining both and doing so with imagination, verve, and rigor. The aim is to empower teachers to empower their students (Labaree 1997).

To this end, we want teacher preparation to be teacher education. Courses in reading instruction offer strategic skills, current research findings, cultural variations of literacy, and assessment tools, bundled to advance reading ability and love of literature. Likewise, educational psychology and human development introduce teacher candidates to the complexities of learning, disaggregated by life stages. History of education, arguably the oldest component of teacher preparation, enables prospective teachers to critique the persistent themes and problems of their profession and to tease out explanations for the

repetitious character of its past (Evenden 1933). History arms them against false dichotomies and inclinations to lapse into simplistic binary modes of thinking. The history of the history of education field suggests its practitioners have not been effective in meeting such expectations, and in any case, curriculum specialists jealously have opposed the goals as impractical (Evenden 1933; Ogren 2005).

Typically ignored in these internecine battles and omitted from historical and sociological analyses is curiosity about links between education and culture, the dynamic structural, moral, and intellectual cohesions that bind people to each other as a community. Rather, pedagogical and discipline-based approaches have conflated education and schooling, leaving the former imprisoned within the latter and schooling disconnected from the forces of alienation and aspiration that propel agency and inspire struggles to endow work, leisure, politics, and common sense with meaning. Teacher education requires programs that equip candidates to understand their own times and those of their students, to be rooted contextually and existentially. Such conceptual complexities and professional imperatives limned the scene TEAC entered in the 1990s. A career-long practitioner of research on teaching and learning, with a take-no-prisoners preference for statistical analyses, Frank Murray thoroughly understood them.

TEAC's origins arose from a determination by the founders to complicate the discouraging narrative of teacher preparation with evidence and insight. They wanted an accreditation system that acknowledged the healthy variety of colleges and universities offering preparation programs. Whether directed toward large or small, public or independent, liberal arts colleges and multi-purpose universities, the essential questions to answer have to do with a program's

effectiveness and a faculty's ability to gather, array, and analyze relevant data. Candidates need to be knowledgeable and confident; faculty and administrators need to draw their expectations of students from systematic, evidence-based research and apply valid and reliable measures of outcomes, as short-lived as they are. Under Frank Murray's leadership, TEAC has been more successful in this effort than the founders had originally anticipated. One reason has been that TEAC extended the principles of continuous assured improvement in teacher preparation to its own system. The aim has been to learn non-defensively from experience, driven by commitments to test, qualitatively and quantitatively, and to experiment.

Important work lies ahead. TEAC has not yet populated its board of directors, committees, and staff with people of color and cultural minorities. Historically black colleges and universities and American Indian institutions are notably absent from its list of accredited programs. This isolation must change. It confers on us an aura of narrow-mindedness and cowardice, an intentional irrelevance with respect to both current events in the world and the minds of teacher candidates and their students-to-be, who will contribute to the shaping of these events. Perhaps, TEAC can learn how to proceed through its planned ventures into Caribbean and Middle Eastern institutions. Here we will encounter not only language diversity but also unique traditions of indigenous teaching and learning. Necessarily, our audits will be contextualized historically. For one, they must be alert to residual effects of twentieth-century U. S. colonialism on schools and teacher preparation programs (Go 2008; Lawrence 2011). More pointedly than in the past, we will need to adapt specific culturally informed orientations in our assessments. As TEAC learns these

essential lessons, it can reach out legitimately and confidently to a wider range of diverse programs, seeking as it has in the past to expand the community of inquiring faculty and teachers. This unifying commitment is our counter to an age of fracture and a TEAC legacy worthy of Frank Murray's pioneering achievements.

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## *Five Essential Tensions in Accreditation*

— Jon F. Wergin

For most of my professional life I've been fascinated with the term "quality." What is it? How do you know it when you see it? How can you communicate what you know to others? Robert Persig, in his classic book *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974), wrote, "Quality... You know what it is, yet you don't know what it is" (p. 225). Persig had it exactly right.

Higher education has had to deal with the quality conundrum only recently. Prior to the 1980's educational quality was mostly about resources and reputation, and this is what accreditors mostly focused on. The more you had of each, the better you were. But then came what Bob Zemsky (1993) called the "loss of sanctuary": with tuition steeply rising, and a college degree not the ticket to a better life that it once was, higher education was no longer immune from having to demonstrate public accountability and assure its usefulness to society.

As the readers of this volume know, accreditation is an institution that is indigenous to the USA. Unlike virtually every other country, public accountability for quality is not a function of a government agency but of peer review. We are accountable to the larger society

through each other. But the loss of sanctuary that Zemsky referred to twenty years ago is being felt with increasing force in accreditation practice. Here's why. Higher education in the United States demonstrates public accountability in three ways: governmental regulation, the marketplace, and peer review.

*Governmental regulation* includes federal and state government and state coordinating and governing boards. Traditionally regulators ensure that higher education institutions are fiscally and socially responsible, that they meet appropriate safety and health standards, and that they offer educational programs that aren't unnecessarily duplicative. When an institution attends to regulation, the goal is *compliance*.

The *marketplace*, especially with the explosion of online learning, has increased the competition for students among educational producers. Institutions and programs that fail to adjust to a changing market put their own health and survival at risk. When an institution attends to the marketplace, the goal is *competitive advantage*.

Of the three forms of public accountability, *peer review* is the only one that focuses on the quality and integrity of student learning itself, and it is the only one over which the institution and its faculty have any direct control. The collective faculty have traditionally been the ones responsible for maintaining program quality, and no one wants to leave that function to the government or to the marketplace.

But increasingly, that is exactly what is happening. Government regulation, in particular from the U.S. Department of Education,



has become far more intrusive in the past decade. Part of this is due to the abuses of the marketplace, where in the search for competitive advantage, for-profit universities have catered to the demands of student “customers” at the expense of quality control. As bureaucracies are wont to do, everyone then pays for the excesses of a few. But we can’t just blame government activism on the for-profit universities out there. We need to look inward as well. The fact is that peer review, the form of public accountability in which the institution should have the greatest vested interest, is also the weakest. We have struggled to develop ways of answering the questions I posed at the beginning of this chapter: What do we mean by academic quality? How do we know it when we see it? And most importantly, how do we communicate what we know to our publics? Such methods of peer review as accreditation and program review policies are widely seen by faculty as little more than rituals – bureaucratic hurdles to clear, necessary evils to put up with so that the real work of the academy can get done. In a study I led for the Pew Charitable Trusts about a dozen years ago (Wergin and Swingen, 2000), my colleagues and I surveyed the assessment practices of 130 institutions around the country, large and small, public and private. What we found, in a nutshell, was a widespread “compliance mentality,” as I called it: Find out what the accreditors want, give it to them, then go back to work. A lot of assessment was going on, but not much institutional learning. It was all quite discouraging. It was the rare institution that was able to use mandated assessment of any type in the service of improved professional practice and better student learning.

In the midst of working through these depressing results, I met Frank Murray and TEAC and found hope. If this seems maudlin,

written only because this chapter is part of a *festshrift*, it nevertheless happens to be true. I saw captured in TEAC principles and policies the embodiment of what the few exemplary institutions in our sample were doing right. I wrote the following in an article for *Change Magazine* about the increasing importance of accreditation:

I believe that alternative models such as TEAC, with [its] dual focus on collective responsibility and public transparency, [has] great promise. Not only does [it] result in greater internal ownership of quality assurance, [it] also responds positively to Congressional mandates for more openness about the process itself. (2005, p. 40)

TEAC isn't *the* answer to quality assurance, of course. No accreditation model is. But TEAC is able to negotiate several essential tensions of quality assurance better than most if not all of the alternative approaches. There are five essential tensions, I think:

- 1. *Outside-in – inside-out perspective.*** Making academic programs accountable to their constituencies has largely been an outside-in phenomenon. The importance of getting a largely insular academy to pay attention to constituent interests is obvious. But a shared commitment to accountability is also needed, a commitment in which both the members of the academy and its constituent communities have a stake. In the Pew study I alluded to earlier, the single most important factor discriminating the few institutions who used assessment successfully from the many that didn't was whether or not the institution had evaluation policies

that were flexible and decentralized (Wergin and Swingen, 2000) – where units were invited to define for themselves the critical evaluation questions, the key stakeholders and sources of evidence, and the most appropriate analysis and interpretation procedures. Without inside-out energy, disappointment with compliance is almost inevitable. That disappointment in turn generates stricter and stricter accountability measures, creating an even greater imbalance between outside-in and inside-out. The TEAC model, with its emphasis on local definitions of quality and a public commitment to quality improvement within a framework of broad professional standards, keeps the tension more centered.

**2. *Standardization – uniqueness.*** Balancing outside-in with inside-out requires attending to a second tension: finding a balance between definitions of quality into which all programs must fit, and those which recognize variations according to contextual variables, such as program and institutional mission and needs of the surrounding community. Graduates of a program that is jockeying for position in the national ratings may not be the best equipped to teach in under-resourced school districts. Programs contribute to the public good in different ways. The message of “we know what a quality program is and we’ll see if you measure up” must be balanced by “we think that *you* know what quality is, and we’ll see if you live up to your own standards.” TEAC does this by requiring candidate programs to write *Inquiry Briefs* in which they make certain

claims about what their graduates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions should be, and then provide evidence to back up these claims. But not everything goes: program claims must adhere to certain core principles promulgated by TEAC and, in many cases, state professional standards of practice.

**3. *Reductionist – essentialist.*** This is a slightly different way of capturing the tension between quantitative and qualitative methods in educational research. Some would argue that nothing is inherently ineffable about educational quality, that any such argument that quality simply can't be defined is defensive and lazy and masks a reluctance to put one's program on the line. If a quality exists, they would contend, then it can be empirically observed; if it can't, then the quality is hopelessly abstract and therefore useless for assessment. Furthermore, if something is empirically observable then one ought to be able to attach a number to it and make comparative analysis possible. Others insist that a program should be evaluated for its essential qualities that don't lend themselves easily to quantification. Using Eisner's (1991) notion of "educational connoisseurship," they argue that reducing complex realities to statistics takes the life out of a program and fails to convey the spirit of what it is doing. While not rejecting the utility of numbers altogether, essentialists find the most revealing source of information about a program to be the story it tells about itself. TEAC has struggled with this tension with only moderate success, in my opinion. In my experience, more often than not writers of *Inquiry Briefs* have succumbed to a compliance mentality,

filling their *Briefs* with numbers they think TEAC wants to see, rather than building an authentic and compelling story about themselves, using evidence that is pulled from a variety of sources, using a variety of methods.

**4. *Outcome-process focus.*** In the past twenty years both regional and specialized accreditors, virtually without exception, have gotten serious about requiring member institutions and programs to specify student learning outcomes, how they assess to these outcomes, and how they use assessment data to improve educational practice. Given the previous focus of accreditors on resources and reputation as markers of quality, this is a welcome shift. I'm troubled, however, about the extent to which a focus on outcomes has been reified. As with the reductionist/essentialist tension above, does anyone really *know* the complete set of important outcomes of a quality education, especially when preparing students for the complexities of professional practice? Every experienced practitioner is able to cite examples of exemplary professionals who excel in spite of – or maybe because of – the degree to which they flout conventional wisdom. Further, holding programs accountable for results discourages risk-taking. This is what happens when faculty members are held hostage to student ratings: they know that tinkering with the status quo, especially when it might create disorientation in the class, will likely lead to a drop in student satisfaction, at least temporarily. Faculty and programs need the freedom to experiment, and to fail. Accountability must focus not just on outcomes but on what programs learn from their

experiments, and what they do with that learning. TEAC could help achieve a better balance between process and outcome by focusing more squarely on organizational learning, and less on how well programs are able to justify their claims.

5. *Public accountability – program improvement.* This is, I think, the most difficult tension to manage of all. Because the culture of accreditation is built upon peer review, it's far easier and less painful to tell colleagues in other institutions what they need to do to improve than it is to tell them that, at the end of the day, they're just not good enough. Accreditors have been pilloried relentlessly for their reluctance to deny accreditation even in the face of the most egregious violations of standards; and when accreditation is denied, the basis for the denial is rarely if ever related to poor educational quality, but to non-pedagogical concerns such as an unsustainable resource base. Most who serve on accreditation teams squirm at being examiners and gatekeepers; they are much more comfortable seeing themselves as colleagues offering friendly criticism when needed. TEAC, with its emphasis on the academic audit, makes it clear that the role of the audit team is to determine how program claims might be verified with available evidence, not to play "gotcha." Fair enough; but who is responsible for making value judgments about the quality of the claims themselves? Does a program that sets high standards for itself, and then falls short, demonstrate lower quality than one that fully achieves more modest claims? I've seen this struggle firsthand as I've served on the TEAC panel: given the candidate program's *Inquiry Brief*, and the audit

of that *Brief*, the panel is charged with making a summative judgment of quality. Here is where all of the tensions I've described come into play. Does the relatively-stronger "inside-out" perspective that TEAC has make demonstration of public accountability more difficult? If program quality is at least partially context-dependent, what aspects of quality should *not* be? Similarly, if a program submits a qualitative, essentialist *Inquiry Brief*, what external standards apply? Doesn't a program have to finally be held accountable for what its graduates can do?

Five years ago, if someone had asked me how I'd respond to all of these questions, I would have had a ready answer: *transparency*. Serving the public good, I would have said, is having a process by which the program is an open book: it makes clear to its constituencies what its mission is and why this mission is important; it makes specific claims about what it aspires for its students, how these claims relate to program mission, and how it knows whether or not students have achieved these claims; and it shows what the program faculty do to improve their educational practice based on the evidence they collect. This is the TEAC process, as publicly transparent as they come. I would have gone further and asserted that quality lies in the eye of the beholder, that it's up to prospective students and their significant others to decide if their investment in that program would be worthwhile, given the kind of teacher or administrator they want to be. Thus, a program's (and by extension, TEAC's) accountability lies in the degree to which it provides authentic information of the sort that allows informed judgments to be made.

While I don't forswear what I would have said five years ago, I've come to the conclusion that TEAC's and other accreditors' responsibility to the public good ought to go further than that. "Informed judgments" aren't always that informed – at least in the way we professionals think they should be. The top criteria that most prospective students use in the uncertain economic climate of today, namely convenience and cost, are highly pragmatic. Accreditation status is one of the criteria, to be sure, but only if accreditation is required for licensure in their state. Besides, if a program is TEAC-accredited, they ask, doesn't that mean that it's good?

Well, maybe, maybe not. Given that virtually every teacher education program that applies for accreditation gets it, the logical conclusion is that teacher education programs must be universally "good." With all the bad press teacher education programs have received in the past two decades, a program's accreditation status has low credibility. We need to take transparency to a new level, and – like other countries do – make professional judgments public: not just whether the program is accredited or not, but also what accreditors have discovered as deficiencies, and what the program is doing about them.

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation has taken a step in the right direction. As posted on the TEAC website:

TEAC has revised its policy on public performance disclosure (Policy XI) in response to a newly instituted standard of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation demanding that *accreditors require the programs and institutions they*



*accredit to report program performance data.* TEAC requests that institutions post a link to the Summary of the Case (now on the TEAC website at [www.teac.org/membership/teac-members/](http://www.teac.org/membership/teac-members/)) on their website along with links to such other performance assessment summaries as they determine appropriate (including websites reporting Title II data). (Posted November 29, 2011, emphasis added)

I would go even further than this. I would make public the recommendations of the TEAC panel and decisions of the Accreditation Committee of the Board, including any stipulations or weaknesses and the rationale for these, now available to the public only if the program chooses to release them.

Taking this step would not resolve any of the five tensions I've written about in this chapter, as they represent dialectics that cannot and *should not* be resolved. Making TEAC's professional judgments public would however make these tensions clearer and more vibrant. First, it would continue to honor TEAC's commitment to inside-out assessment, while acknowledging the need for more than just token outside-in perspectives. Second, it would recognize a program's uniqueness, while affirming that some standards are not negotiable. Third, it would make public the reasons for TEAC's concerns about a program, and force auditors, panelists, and committee members to reveal their biases about "what counts" as evidence. Fourth, by isolating weaknesses in both a program's quality control system and its student learning evidence, it would underscore the importance of both process and outcome. Fifth and finally, it would maintain TEAC's firm commitment to program improvement while also putting some teeth into public accountability.

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*Doing Better:  
Musings on Teacher Education,  
Accountability, and Evidence*

— Suzanne M. Wilson

*Healthy fields have some humility about current approaches and theories and maintain an open mind in their consideration of the alternate approaches that are advanced by colleagues. They suspend judgment until the evidence is in. They balance their legitimate skepticism with generous assumptions about the motives of others. . . . (Murray, 2005, p. 315)*

We live in an age of calls for increasing accountability, whether on Wall Street or in school districts. In teacher education, this accountability takes several forms. Program accreditation has been around since at least the 1950s and the National Defense Education Act; NCLB's Title II placed myriad requirements on higher education and state departments of education for testing teachers; currently there are calls for value-added assessments of teacher education programs. While some teacher educators prefer to ignore these increasingly insistent calls for accountability, we live in an age in which alternatives to university-based teacher education proliferate. While alternative

pathways into teaching do not prepare the majority of teachers, they represent an unprecedented threat to what some consider a monopoly on teacher preparation held by higher education. How we respond to demands to demonstrate our worth matters.

Of course, accountability, in and of itself, is not a bad thing. We hold banks accountable for being good stewards of our money. Parents regularly teach their children to be accountable for their actions. We hold doctors, lawyers, architects, and nurses accountable to their respective professional standards for practice. In this sense, the heightened call for accountability in teacher education and in the programs that prepare teachers is reasonable, even responsible. Demonstrating that our programs meet professional expectations is part and parcel of claiming membership in any guild. And just as a parent does not accept a child's protestations that she means to be responsible, so too it is not unreasonable that the public and policymakers want teacher education programs to produce something other than promises of good intentions. Instead of only documenting inputs, the argument goes, programs should also demonstrate outputs and effects. Data has become the coin of the realm, whether in evidence-based medicine or data-driven decision-making. Data will make us leaner, more efficient, more honest. Looking at the data will help us become better versions of ourselves.

In addition to this emphasis on evidence and data, we are experiencing a shift in what the public considers the appropriate unit of analysis. Former accountability paradigms held students accountable for their learning; current discourse focuses intently on the teacher (through value-added measures) and schools (through publicly

available school report cards). Similarly, if teachers did not perform well, old paradigms pointed to their background; if teaching was not of high quality, it might be due to who enters the profession. That logic no longer dominates. Instead, the teacher preparation program – its selection criteria, its content, its resources – is what matters.

Of course, these calls for accountability and evidence have not been without their critics. “Being held accountable” can communicate a sense of distrust or suspicion. Being held accountable can also misplace attribution; assuming that one has control over factors and forces that are beyond one’s reach. Accountability can also be operationalized to mean standardization and/or quantification. Accountability can overemphasize that which is measurable and marginalize equally important aspects of our lives that prove less amenable to quantification. Thus, it can distort rather than enhance, constrain rather than enable.

So how do we as teacher educators act responsibly in light of increased calls to be accountable and a heightened awareness that such calls are neither innocent nor innocuous? How we answer this question, I believe, will fundamentally shape how we are positioned in present and future discussions about who should prepare teachers, where that preparation should take place, and what the focus of preparation ought to be. My own answer? We can do better.

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In the spirit of “do as I say,” let me start with a story from my own university. In terms of data, we swim in a sea of it. We have information

on every undergraduate before and after matriculation. We know their ACT scores and subscores, the high schools they attended and their class rank. We know their gender, race, ethnicity, high school GPA, and high school grades in specific courses. We know what advanced placement courses they took and their scores. After they arrive at MSU, we know the college courses they have taken, who taught them, how large the classes were, and what grades they received in each class, as well as their GPA in their majors, minors, and professional coursework.

That's not all. During our program's yearlong internship, we have field instructors observe each intern about 10 times; in addition, both cooperating teachers and field instructors fill out mid-year and end-of-year evaluations. We also get data from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) every year on the performance of our prospective teachers on content examinations, as well as feedback on MDE surveys taken by all of our graduates and their field instructors.

We're awash with data: test scores, calls from parents, letters from students, emails from principals and teachers, students' GPAs, interns' mid-year evaluations. Every day we respond to information we have received and interpreted: A doctoral student has to be removed from field instruction because he is not visiting an intern's classroom regularly enough and his feedback is neither frequent nor constructive. An instructor needs support in learning to teach her class better, her students are confused and feel like they are wasting their time. An intern needs to be moved to a different classroom because her collaborating teacher is not providing her with sufficient opportunities to teach. The state has changed the requirements for

elementary teacher certification and testing, and new agreements need to be created across campus with the general education and disciplinary department faculty.

As we respond, we're constantly using data. We evaluate the records of all of our current students and make sure that they are abiding by requirements concerning their grades in their professional courses and other required courses across the university. We do background checks before they enter the internship, and we have a well-articulated set of expectations for what they have to do in order to progress to that internship. As Department chair, I read the student evaluations (SIRS) for every course for every instructor for every term, as do the instructors for each class. Every faculty member who supervises a course with multiple sections also reads and reviews the SIRS for all instructors for whom they have supervisory responsibilities.

We submit reports annually to the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) as part of our accreditation agreement, for which we conduct analyses of our students' grades in their content and professional classes, as well as review other relevant evidence. We regularly write reports to the MDE concerning changes in state expectations and policies, whether reporting on experimental programs or innovations in using technology in teacher education or summarizing feedback we receive in our state-mandated survey of school principals. In addition, many faculty and doctoral students regularly conduct research on our teacher preparation program, observing classes, shadowing interns, gathering qualitative and quantitative data concerning the program's content and character, as well as its effects on participating teachers. Dissertations get written,

articles and books are published.<sup>1</sup>

Our program and our faculty are, thus, in perpetual motion, and almost every activity is either catalyzed or informed by data and evidence. Accountability is everywhere: students are accountable to the program, instructors and field instructors are accountable to their supervisors, everyone is accountable to the chair, the chair is accountable to the dean, the college and the program are accountable to the university and to the state.

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Given how accountability and data have seeped into the marrow of our organizational bones, calls for additional accountability can be experienced as both tiresome and suspect. At the very least, calls for evidence take time and other resources (personnel and the technology and infrastructure needed for data collection, management, and analysis). Most recently this came in the form of producing documents for the National Council of Teacher Quality's *U.S. News and World*

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<sup>1</sup> All of this takes place on a much larger stage, for teacher education is not the only work we are required to do in my department. The university expects us to offer courses with high enrollments and attractive majors and minors and to have thriving and rigorous graduate programs at the masters and doctoral level, which have high application and low admission rates. In addition, faculty are expected to raise grant money and publish research articles, serve on important professional committees, and do outreach to local and global communities and constituencies. To evaluate our productivity and to keep us accountable, the university has a range of metrics they use: student enrollments, class size, student retention and graduation rates; the GRE scores of our admitted doctoral students; research dollars raised per faculty member per year and over three years, the number of publications per faculty member, awards won by faculty and their doctoral students; the diversity of the student, staff, and faculty; retention rates for faculty of color; and the like. Administrators and faculty are fed this information every year, and we are all expected to respond with specific goals and quantified targets that will demonstrate how we are striving to improve.



*Report* review, for which we had to retrieve syllabi for all required courses (and every section) that prospective elementary teachers took in one year (totaling 402 syllabi), as well as the guidance documents and written policies used for our communication with collaborating teachers, school principals, field instructors, and everyone else involved in field experiences (97 documents). All told, for one round of data collection, three people worked full time for a week, two additional for three days, and 100s of emails were sent and responded to. (This is on top of the ordinary work that needs attending to.) To be worth those costs, we have some obligation to use calls for accountability to our advantage, as opportunities to examine ourselves, while also proactively fighting the tidal pull toward standardization and quantification that can constrain and limit our efforts to responsibly educate. So as I consider what teacher educators ought to do in the face of this press to be accountable, again I can only ground it in what I think we might do in our own program, and how I think we can improve.

Such improvement would mean attending to both the individual prospective teacher/instructor and the program. Recall how much information gets collected and used for making individual student decisions. In the internship year itself, we have 500 students, 10 observations, 2 evaluations, which means that we have at least 6000 data points on the program's effectiveness. We also have the information we gather on their grades and grade point averages, used both to admit them to the program and to monitor their progress, which includes their performance in liberal studies, disciplinary majors and minors, and professional coursework. We're quite vigilant in watching our students' progress, an expensive enterprise.

We place these data – the interns’ grades and GPAs, our observations and their evaluations – in individual folders, filed away in case of a grievance.<sup>2</sup> The individual is our unit of analysis. This makes sense: after all, in our daily work our obligation is to make sure that every prospective teacher masters the content of the program and is a successfully launched beginner who we recommend for initial state licensure.

Save for the data analyses we do for our annual reports to TEAC for accreditation, we seldom examine or use these data to have discussions among ourselves – or with our colleagues across campus – about what aspects of the program are stronger and weaker. We don’t examine correlations between the background characteristics of our teacher education students and their later teaching performance (including their ACT scores, high school rank, high school classification, grades and GPAs in disciplinary or general studies courses). We don’t use the observational data that we gather to track interns’ progress to assess program effectiveness by asking, “What patterns do we see in what our interns can and cannot do?” Further, although we carefully review the student evaluations for signs that individual instructors need support in improving their instruction, we do not systematically and holistically analyze the sum of the coursework and its correlations to interns’ performance in their fifth year. We are focused almost exclusively on the students, or on the individual instructor. Without even considering gathering additional (or better) data, we have not

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<sup>2</sup> This was brought home to me one day when an intern filed a grievance about being removed from the program midyear, and when I went to examine her file, I was told that all of the materials were at the home of the field instructor who worked with the intern. To get the materials, the field instructor had to drive an hour and a half to deliver them to my office.

begun to plumb the potential of the data we swim in to explore our program's strengths and weaknesses.

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Shifting our vision to become bifocal – with one eye on the prospective teacher and another eye on the program – might seem straightforward. New technologies make it possible to put a tablet in the hands of every field instructor and collaborating teacher so that those observations and mid-year evaluations are electronically deposited in a centralized warehouse of information, and easily accessed by appropriate and appropriately trained users. Other technologies now make it possible that materials digitally uploaded into course management systems – students' writing, course syllabi, student evaluations, tests, videotapes of interns' teaching – could also be deposited in a program's electronic warehouse and viewed by people other than the individual instructor or student. Other technologies could easily de-identify materials so that individual students' privacy would be protected. Faculty meetings could involve discussing the firsthand evidence available to all program leaders, viewing and discussing interns' teaching, examining student work. Course instructors could see evidence of what happens with students in other courses and later in the program, and have a longitudinal view of how their course fits into a more collective enterprise.

Notwithstanding the need to be vigilant in protecting the rights of individual students' privacy, limiting who viewed any data that was not de-identified, the possibilities for seeing a bigger picture of what a program is doing or not doing are mind-blowing. When I first realized that we had 6000 data points on our program in the form

of field observations and evaluations, for example, I was gleeful. The interns are in the program for three years, at any one point in time, we have 1500 teachers in the system who go through in cohorts. We have access to a wide array of other information through the university. As a researcher, I would give my eyeteeth for that kind of qualitative/quantitative data, especially in the field of teacher education where there has been historically so little funding, an obstacle for large-scale studies of program effects.

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Others were less excited. When I proposed moving note-taking from the individualized forms to a computer app that would make it possible for field instructors and collaborating teachers to log on, type in their notes, and press a button to have it sent to the department, I was told that the field instructors had abandoned the observation form (they felt it constrained them) and that the different subject areas in secondary teacher preparation could not agree on a common form (the subject matter differences are too great to allow for such uniformity). I also found out about some field instructors who had never submitted any information and the considerable amount of missing data that were not accounted for.<sup>3</sup> Further dismaying was the discovery that a number of doctoral students and fixed term faculty did not use the syllabi or assignments that were carefully crafted by the course coordinator, choosing instead to create a course that they felt was better suited for their students. This resonated with our experiences when attempting to use program wide assessments as part

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<sup>3</sup> This was reinforced when we conducted an audit of our files for the purposes of our TEAC review; for a randomly selected group of students, we found many files with missing information from throughout their program.

of our accreditation process: in numerous courses, instructors either did not use the standard assessments, or fundamentally altered them, and hardly anyone used the common rubrics that had been created for scoring.

The strong resistance represented in these actions is not powered by a desire to be sloppy teacher educators; in fact, many instructors resist what they consider a march toward standardization in the name of maintaining quality and personal attention. Of course, in a program as large as ours, the chances of hiring an irresponsible field instructor who fails to fulfill her obligations, or a responsible one who forgets to bring the papers to campus increase. That the field instructors found the observation forms constraining was not unsurprising either. We already know that field instructors and collaborating teachers often feel a tension between their dual role of both supporting and evaluating new teachers. Furthermore, our program is constantly churning and we encourage students and faculty to be critical of the courses and tools that we use. It is also not surprising that some instructors throw out a common syllabus or assignments in favor of what they want to teach; closing the classroom door and doing what one pleases has a long history in American schooling, at both the K-12 and higher education levels. In higher education, instructors regularly invoke the language of “academic freedom” in defense of this choice. It is not always a bad idea; the fact that a syllabus is standardized does not make it good.

While some might want to simply dismiss this resistance as evidence of the low quality of teacher education programs and faculty, there is considerable evidence higher education in general lacks

what some have called a “culture of evidence.” Understanding this resistance to making one’s work public and increasing internal and external accountability as rooted in cultural norms is an important step in finding ways to fight it. And to learn from it. Making sure paperwork is filed is relatively straightforward. But shaking the deep roots of this widespread resistance to collective and public inquiry into the quality of our programs is much harder. And it should be. We want to make sure that any time we increase accountability, that change is intentionally designed to improve, not constrain, program quality. This too we can do better.

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First off, we can insist on a generous conception of evidence. The evidence-based movement has, in general, elevated quantifiable data and experimental designs over narrative and observational data, and this had lead some teacher educators to reject calls for accountability based on the assumption that the only evidence that will be taken seriously is that which is quantifiable. But a narrow view of evidence is not a requirement of a commitment to evidence; in fact, many in the evidence-based medicine movement argue against the oversimplified interpretation that evidence only refers to data produced from experimental designs. We can choose to conceive of evidence in a broad way, and one that does not presume a hierarchy of evidence (with randomized, double blind experiments at the top) but instead insists on defensible alignment of the evidence best suited to the question at hand. For some questions, one needs carefully done observational work. For other questions, one needs large-scale experiments. In teacher education, we need careful observations of our interns working in the classrooms of collaborating teachers, and we also need

results of their performance on standardized tests. Ideally, we would have multiple methods of collecting data for each major outcome we care about so that we might triangulate across those different sources of inherently limited empirical evidence. To use my own example, the 6000 observations that we have of our interns in one given year are a mix of some Likert-scale ratings with a lot of observational notes and narratives, peppered with examples drawn from those observations. Similarly, instructors in courses write comments on papers, as well as assign grades. As part of the normal work of teacher education, we regularly produce evidence that is both qualitative and quantitative. There is no reason why we cannot use the full range of evidence we have available.

Well, there is one reason. We should only use evidence we trust, and we could do better in terms of increasing the quality of the data we produce. Whether one is most comfortable conceptualizing these issues as with the language of reliability and validity or the language of credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability, and soundness, we have an obligation to ensure that the data we use to make decisions both about individual prospective teachers and about the program's quality are of high quality.

Increasing the quality of our evidence could take many forms. University professors and K-12 teachers alike create assessments and tests of what students have learned that are never themselves assessed to learn whether they accurately measure what they are designed to measure. In the 34 years that I have been a teacher, no one has ever asked me to prove that my tests are valid assessments of my students' learning. Our field instructors get considerable support in learning to do the work; they participate in a mandatory seminar about learning to

teach, and they meet regularly with supervising faculty. But we seldom engage in exercises to make sure that their observations are reliable. We don't check the inter-rater reliability of their observations; we do not conduct validity studies of their evaluations and reports. Similarly, if we use common assignments across course sections, we do not examine whether the grading is comparable by calculating inter-rater reliability within a course.

Without demanding that all faculty turn their attention to producing technical reports of the reliability of their measures, we could do better. We could look at the consistency of a student's performance within and across classes; we could analyze the variability in grades across different sections of the same course in courses across the university. We could do outlier analyses of students who fail courses or the internship; we could systematically rotate field instructors to check the consistency of observational data. We could adopt the practice of many university writing programs where instructors use common end-of-course assignments, and another instructor grades the papers from their seminar as an internal accountability check on consistent instruction and expectations.

Of course, studying our measures and assessment tools would surely show us that our measures are limited. In discussions of why ratings vary on an observational instrument, one might work to calibrate the raters so that their scoring is more similar. Alternatively, differences might lead to reconsidering the instrument itself, and altering it in ways that are more responsive to what the raters need to record. Examining a test in a disciplinary course might raise questions about whether the test is testing the intended learning. At Michigan



State, the instructors of our general education courses (called Integrated Studies) decided to do that. When they examined the assessments used across the integrated studies courses, they were chagrined to discover that the content of the tests did not align with the goals of the courses. They were also surprised to learn, in consultation with testing experts on campus, that if one wants to test a student’s knowledge of a concept – say, global warming – there are mathematical ways to estimate how many questions one needs to build a scale comprised of responses to individual items. Their common practice – for one idea, generate one or two questions – was problematic if they wanted accurate measures of what students learned. The assessments that the group created after working collectively on their tests and having them critically appraised by outsiders were much different than what they had first created.

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I use the example of the Integrated Studies faculty intentionally. While a generous view of evidence and better instruments might well contribute to improvements in our programs, one cannot underestimate the need for joint work.

We work within cultures, and those cultures have norms and structures that pull us in certain directions. Without making any generalizations about teacher education more generally, I will assert that our culture is one of a focus on the individual student and teacher. We work hard to select the right students, to track their progress, to challenge them with good courses, to document their learning to teach in meaningful ways, all in the name of being confident that anyone we recommend for state certification is a well-launched beginner. As

part of that work, we, of course, work on the content and character of the program: we are constantly changing readings and assignments in courses, adapting both to new knowledge in our relevant fields and to our experiences with what works and does not work with students. However, the orientation is largely focused on making sure that individual students make it through the program or are counseled out. Everything we do, our daily actions and reactions, all reinforce that orientation.

Shifting those norms to include a collective and programmatic perspective meets with considerable resistance, both voiced and behavioral. When I suggested that we create an electronic warehouse of data so that we might both improve program quality and make it possible for doctoral students and faculty to conduct research, one faculty member told me, “You’re acting like Big Brother,” invoking Orwell’s omnipresent dictator. Others, less willing to publically raise concerns, simply close their classroom doors and do what they think is best. Declaring that we can do better will not change our orientation toward the individual, nor will insisting on using standard forms lead to high quality evidence. Words alone cannot fight those institutional structures and cultural norms.

This is, by far, the most challenging aspect of participating in the TEAC accreditation. When visiting campuses, auditors listen for language that suggests that the entire institution has shifted from doing program analyses for the purposes of submitting accreditation reports (“for TEAC”) to doing program analyses for the purposes of informing the program’s on-going improvement. But creating a “culture of evidence” takes years, and it does not happen by directive from an administrator or a state department official. It is especially

hard in a political and intellectual environment in which some calls for accountability are of questionable motive and in which K-12 teachers and (increasingly) faculty in higher education feel pummeled by criticisms and calls for writing more reports.

Joint work, authored by the insiders, can help. The Integrated Studies faculty started out with modest goals: to do some internal monitoring of the content of their classes. As serious teachers, however, they were pulled more and more into the activity as they began to uncover evidence that challenged their assumptions. (None of this was motivated by accreditation requirements or state-mandated reviews.) And the more they discovered, the more interested they became in gathering more information and reaching out to experts who might expand their own understanding and capacity. This is not surprising; as scholars, they regularly interrogate colleagues' work with respect to the use of high quality data, reasoned arguments, and rigorous analysis. When their inquiry into their own teaching tapped into their scholarly habits, the work they were able to do both challenged them and led to critical examination and considerable curricular change. With their imaginations fired and driven by their own curiosity about work they were seriously invested in, they energetically opened up to changing how and what they taught.

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Earlier I mentioned that the call for accountability and the increased use of evidence is neither innocent nor innocuous. Nor is evidence – as generously conceived as possible – the only basis for making decisions about education. It might help us a lot to look more carefully at information that we already gather, and to strive to

improve the quality of the evidence and our interpretations, we need to also always ask the hermeneutical question, “In whose interest are these data collected and interpreted? And to what end?” Our critics are quick to point out that it is in our self-interest that we collect much of the data we do in teacher education programs (personally, I am never persuaded that high GPAs in professional coursework is a trustworthy indicator of teacher learning; I’ve reviewed the GPAs in courses across the university and grade inflation is as omnipresent as the press for being more accountable). And we’re equally swift in pointing out that some of our critics’ self-interests are questionable as well. Here too we can do better.

Internally, we can begin considering how our own self-interests seep into our assessments of our students and our programs. Externally, we can commit to raising the quality of the debate about the trustworthiness of teacher education and the need for increased accountability by resisting oversimplifications that turn a request for evidence into a hegemony of numbers or a genuine interest in what we might learn from programmatic views of our students’ learning into Orwellian dictators robbing all citizens of their privacy. There is no honor in that.

That is not to say that we ought not be wary. In the end, high quality teacher preparation needs to be informed by the values and beliefs of multiple stakeholders – the public’s views of who should teach their children, the disciplines’ views of what it means to be well educated in a subject area, educators’ views of what it takes to be a good teacher. Teacher preparation needs to also aggressively snatch up any and all new knowledge generated by high quality research on teaching and learning, no matter what the tradition the researchers

follow. We need to resist the imperialism of some who would narrow the views of what counts as good teaching or good evidence, and we need to nurture a culture of open and critical debate about what it takes to prepare people to teach. We'll have no credibility in those debates if we do not model how to look critically at ourselves as well, in healthy and generative ways (which includes questioning whether responding to a call for more accountability is always a good thing). And that takes, as Murray (2010) argued, humility, generosity, and skepticism. It also takes time.





*Higher Education, Accreditation,  
and Change, Change, Change:  
What's Teacher Education To Do?*

— Barbara Brittingham

*This paper starts with the observation that accreditation is more visible than ever because higher education has become more important and more expensive to individuals and society. From that observation, I will focus on three developments that are sharpening the focus of accreditation and can increase its power to help us understand educational effectiveness, and then provide some advice to institutions on how they might respond to these new developments. The paper will conclude with a brief discussion of implications for teacher education.*

**Accreditation is more visible than ever because higher education has become more important and more expensive to individuals and society.**

Accreditation, that once sleepy enterprise cresting the university's horizon every ten years, has suddenly become visible. If not center stage – and accreditation is, after all, a supporting player – it is at

least *on* the stage and no longer in the restricted view seats. No longer is institutional accreditation a decennial event; it has developed into a relationship. And while they may not be pleased about it, no longer are presidents surprised at the number of specialized accreditors engaged with their campus.

Why? What has happened to bring accreditation more visibility? Accreditation is an American invention that traces its roots to 1885 with the founding of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Followed by similar organizations in other parts of the U.S., these now-regional accrediting associations developed slowly over several decades. Since the 1950's regional accreditation has operated in a format recognizable today, with the common elements of standards to be met, an institutional self-study, a visit to validate the self-study, and a decision by a group of peers. Also since the 1950's, the federal government has relied on its system to 'recognize' accreditors as 'reliable authorities' on the quality of education for purposes of access to federal financial aid.

The recent increase in the visibility and importance of accreditation is due to at least four factors:

1. an economy that increasingly depends on a college-educated workforce, and the importance of a college education for individuals' success in the economy;
2. more students going to college, both of traditional age and adult students;
3. lower international rankings of U.S. higher education;



4. a dramatic change in how higher education is funded: less state money, more federal money, and higher student debt.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, higher education in the United States is more important and more expensive than ever, and the anxiety of individuals about cost and benefit is exacerbated by the collective anxiety that our system of higher education is not as effective as it should be, at a time of considerable economic uncertainty. In the popular press, the plight of two groups of students has been particularly prominent: students at for-profit colleges, an institutional type that has concerned some in the federal government for the greatly increased amount of financial aid these institutions consume; and students at law-schools. Both groups of students, who otherwise have little in common, have been portrayed as casualties in a system that does not focus on skills employers want most nor reliably produce employment at sufficiently high salaries for these graduates to repay their often considerable student loan debt.

In the search for solutions to the problems of high importance, high cost, high debt, and uncertain prospects for employment sufficient to repay the loans, the summative question for individuals and for policy makers is, What are we getting for our money? And the hook that policy makers often reach for is accreditation. Because of the link with federal financial aid, accreditation represents one of the few avenues of direct influence – i.e., regulation – that the federal government can exercise over colleges and universities. While this increased prominence is a mixed blessing for accreditation, it

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<sup>1</sup> Funding for Pell Grants alone has nearly tripled since 2008 to over \$40 billion. Student loan debt approaches \$1 trillion, and the average debt among baccalaureate graduates with debt is over \$25,000.

does give accreditation more importance, and therefore changes to accreditation have a heightened impact on institutions and programs.

**Three developments are sharpening the focus of accreditation and can increase its power to understand and improve educational effectiveness.**

**Accreditation is becoming more focused on data and evidence.** As accreditation has become more important, it has also increasingly focused on data and evidence. Some of this increased focus is due to political pressure (see above). And some of the increased focus is a natural by-product of institutions increasingly having the tools that allow an evidence-based approach to self-study. Institutional research offices, student record systems, and other technologies have provided institutions with greater capacity to use trustworthy evidence and data for self-study.

Some of the heightened expectations are due to what accreditors now expect to see in institutional reports. TEAC is a prime example here, with the institutional report (aka self-study, or *Inquiry Brief*, in the TEAC system) being a program's own audit that traces its policies to their implementation in practice and examines evidence of student learning. Also, in the TEAC system, the visit step of the process is conducted by trained auditors rather than a team of (arguably) lightly trained peers, stripping away the theatre associated with normal visits and allowing the process a greater focus on verifiable evidence and data.

TEAC takes the general emphasis on evidence and data one step further by stating that its process is "inquiry driven, starting

from the faculty’s own questions and curiosity about the program’s accomplishments,”<sup>2</sup> a further step in moving accreditation from a compliance step to an exercise with scholarly implications. And in fact “faculty learning and inquiry” is the second of three of TEAC’s *Quality Principles* upon which its accreditation is based.

Thus, with accreditation’s increased visibility locally and nationally and increased institutional capacity to gather and use meaningful evidence and data, accreditation is, arguably at least, poised to become increasingly useful as a stronger means of quality assurance as well as quality improvement.

An increased focus on student success is connecting K-12 and higher education. The history of connecting secondary and higher education is one of good intentions, great effort, and less-than-stellar success. The current large-scale effort centers on the Common Core State Standards, now adopted by all but five states. PARCC – the Partnership for Readiness for College and Careers – is a 25-state effort funded by \$186 million federal grant to develop a “next generation” K-12 assessment system centered on English and math skills needed for success in college. The Lumina Foundation is also funding state efforts to connect the success of students in secondary education with their success in higher education, and in some localities there are individual efforts that bring these principles close to the ground.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.teac.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/TEAC-StandardQuality.pdf> on 12.30.11

<sup>3</sup> for example, see [http://www.neasc.org/downloads/2011\\_annual\\_meeting\\_presentations\\_CIHE/NEASCCommonCorePanel4FlemingCummingsMarkMarkPeaseSakoffs.pdf](http://www.neasc.org/downloads/2011_annual_meeting_presentations_CIHE/NEASCCommonCorePanel4FlemingCummingsMarkMarkPeaseSakoffs.pdf)

There are at least two outcomes to be avoided here: 1) measures of high school achievement that don't predict college success; and 2) inducing Campbell's law by creating a high-stakes test that becomes corrupted by its very importance. In the case of the former, Massachusetts' community colleges have found that while average student scores have increased on MCAS, the state's high stakes high school-leaving examination, the proportion of community college students requiring development math and writing courses has remained essentially flat. In the second case, the cheating scandal in the Atlanta schools (uncovered in July 2011), for example, makes Campbell's point.

Agreeing on useful measures of success in education is notoriously challenging. For example, the most common measures of success in higher education – at least in the public policy debates – are the IPEDS retention and graduation rates. But because these rates include only first-time full-time students, ignore transfer students, and have an upper limit of 150% of the estimated time-to-degree, they are of limited utility. For some institutions with high rates of part-time and transfer-in students, the IPEDS rates may measure retention and graduation rates for only about 10% of the student body. And – no surprise – students from more advantaged backgrounds tend to persist and graduate at higher rates than students from more challenging backgrounds.

Help is on the way. Some states are developing student record systems that can track students from K-12 through higher education. And the American Association of Community Colleges, for which members' traditional retention and graduation rates are most problematic, has developed a Voluntary Framework of Accountability

that will help community colleges use more inclusive and descriptive measures of retention and graduation. Also, the National Student Clearinghouse now includes virtually all public and non-profit institutions and a growing proportion of for-profit institutions; participation in the Clearinghouse lets colleges and universities learn the destination and success of students who transfer out and can also help them track the destination and field of study for students who go on to a higher degree.

In teacher education, there are now efforts to measure the success of teacher education programs by looking at how much pupils learn from their teachers-in-training, or from the graduates as newly prepared teachers. For example, Louisiana now has a student record system that incorporates K-12 students in public schools and teacher education students from programs in public and private higher education as well as alternative programs and is gaining some experience in its use. The measurement challenges here are considerable, and it is too early to know under what conditions these ambitious systems can produce results that are sufficiently reliable to make judgments on program success. In addition to measurement problems, other challenges are also present: Will such systems further narrow teacher preparation, with new teachers being prepared to teach those topics that will be on the school assessment system? That would be a high price to pay for a system that purports to measure the effectiveness of teacher education programs.

**Technology and open-access education are changing our understanding of higher education.** If the past twenty years have seen the introduction of technology to deliver instruction in the

classroom – physical or virtual – we are now seeing the introduction of technology to expand the boundaries of the university and to harness the back end of technology to understand human learning.

Consider three new initiatives:

- 1. MIT's OpenCourseWare** project was announced in 2002 as an effort to put all of MIT's course-related materials on-line and freely available. By November 2011, over 2,000 courses had materials available on-line, including discussion topics, problem sets, answers to the problems, streaming video lectures, and interactive web demonstrations. By making course material freely available, MIT extended the benefits not only to students and the public, but also to faculty from institutions around the world who can benefit from seeing the curriculum and expectations of MIT for a particular course.

In December 2011, MIT took the project to the next step: in spring semester 2012, it will begin to make interactive versions of courses available on-line through an initiative known as MITx. Two major steps are of interest here: (1) students will have an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter and by so doing can earn a certificate from MITx; and (2) the initiative will be accompanied by an Institute-wide initiative on on-line teaching and learning.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> MITx is a particularly interesting initiative from an institution that offers no degrees on-line and does not have an education school. The initiative comes from MIT's deep commitment to sharing knowledge freely, its depth in technology and cognitive sciences, and its willingness to take some risks.

2. **The Kahn Academy**, outgrowth of a Bangladeshi-American's efforts to tutor his young cousins, now makes over 2,600 videos available on YouTube on topics that range from arithmetic to physics to finance to history. With over 90 million lessons delivered, the non-profit organization announces its "goal of changing education for the better by providing a free world-class education to anyone anywhere."
  
3. The awarding of **digital badges** is another potential "game-changer," as it has been called by Education Secretary Arne Duncan. The idea of digital badges is to create a system of validated learning that has occurred informally, i.e., outside the classroom. The learning could be validated by colleges or universities – or technical or trade groups, corporations, open courseware groups, or non-profit organizations. Recently, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation announced a \$2 million competition for "leading organizations, learning and assessment specialists, designers and technologies to create and test badges and badge systems. . . .[to] unlock job, educational and civic opportunities; and open new pipelines to talent."<sup>5</sup> Because the badges are digital, they can be linked to examples of student work, making them available for colleges and employers to review and consider.

These initiatives, and others like them, hold extraordinary potential to open higher education – for institutions to learn from each other, to increase the useful ability of institutions and faculty

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.macfound.org/site/c.ikLXJ8MQKrH/b.4196225/apps/s/content.asp?ct=11221065>

members to focus on learning outcomes, and to create efficiencies in education. Each of the above do or can make increased use of learning analytics that hold great promise to expand our understanding of how students learn.<sup>6</sup> For accreditation, these non-institutional, validated-to-credit sources of student learning increase the focus on outcomes.

**These changes in higher education and accreditation have implications for institutions and programs.** Higher education is in a period of considerable and perhaps fundamental change. And therefore, accreditation will change as well. With an increased focus on accountability – quality assurance – accreditation is challenged to keep, and indeed strengthen, its focus on institutional and programmatic improvement.

In a period of such rapid change, identifying the initiatives, investments, and risks – for institutions and for accreditors – is of key importance. Below are three suggestions for institutions and their programs:

**Build capacity for using evidence and data.** Institutions can build the capacity of faculty to consider and use evidence and data in assessing student learning, judging program quality, and determining how well the institution and its programs meet its academic and social goals (e.g., teacher education graduates are employed at high rates by local schools; the institution is consistently on the list of 25 that send a high number of graduates to the Peace Corps;

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, <http://wp.nmc.org/horizon2011/sections/learning-analytics/>



applicants to medical school are accepted at a high rate; graduates from business programs are employed quickly at a competitive salary).

Building capacity of this sort is a significant undertaking, representing challenges that are academic as well as economic. On the academic front, specialized accreditation has provided much of the impetus to develop assessment systems at colleges and universities. Also, the methodology of assessment is essentially that of the social sciences; properly done, assessment calls on faculty to have a working knowledge of measurement, statistics, indicators – and qualitative methods that can provide a vivid description of student experience. So it is no accident that in the great majority of institutions, assessment of student learning has progressed more quickly in quantitative disciplines that have programmatic accreditation (engineering programs with ABET accreditation are the poster child here), and least quickly in the humanities (with no external accreditor and less tradition, interest, and capacity for quantitative analysis of student success). On the economic front, building the capacity to ensure that consideration of evidence and data become part of the departments' routine is an added cost in the sense that it calls upon faculty to take on additional responsibilities at a time when many if not most institutions are feeling considerable financial strain.

Building this capacity is not simple, and it takes time. Developing institutional habits of using data and evidence, in

the self-study for example, is subject to Mooers' law, which states that people won't use information if it takes more time to use it than to not use it. And after all, aren't self-studies easier to write if we rely on description and assertion than if we have to take the time to round up the data and evidence, understand it, consider its limitations, discern the main points, and weave it into our narrative? Yes, they are. So the understanding of why evidence and data are important and useful is key to ensuring their use in the accreditation process.

Many institutions have increased their capacity through offices of institutional research, assessment, and academic planning and centers for teaching and learning. Still, on the ground, at the department level, finding useful and methodologically respectable ways to understand student success in ways that can support program improvement represents a long-term undertaking.

- 4. Study *how* students learn as well as assess *what* they learn.** If assessment results only in information about what students have learned but not how they went about learning, the result may be very little useful information for improvement. This *what* but not *how* phenomenon is one of the great sources of frustrations with measures such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment which may – and the emphasis here is on *may* – provide information on how much students have gained from their college education – but that result in virtually no information useful to faculty or academic administrators that can be used to improve students' education.

Institutions have found numerous relatively easy ways of understanding how students learn. Results of standardized surveys (such as NSSE and CSSE) can provide some helpful information, along with comparison data. Curriculum mapping exercises can reveal how much opportunity students are given to learn important skills and concepts. And asking students directly how they go about a particular assignment or prepare for specific examination can be a useful, if sometimes humbling, source of feedback. Faculty development programs that focus on advances in cognitive science and educational psychology can bring in a more theoretical understanding of student learning. Finally, finding a way to use learning analytics can increase faculty sophistication about how students learn.

**5. Be open to, but validate, non-collegiate learning.**

MIT OpenCourseWare, digital badges: Higher education will increasingly need to consider when – or whether – to award credit for non-collegiate activity. For most institutions, it will be a matter of under what circumstances it will do so, not whether it will do so.

To some extent, of course, this already happens. Bright high school students can take AP courses, pass a test, and the university can elect to award credit for students who pass at a designated level. Also, CLEP exams are designed to allow adult learners to demonstrate through examination that they have (somehow) learned what students learn in designated college courses. CAEL, the Council for Adult

and Experiential Learning, helps adults gain credit for what they've learned outside the classroom. And for over three decades the American Council on Education has maintained the College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT) that provides a structured and trustworthy opportunity for non-collegiate learning to be evaluated by academic peers, with recommendations for college credit that institutions are free to embrace or ignore.

We can anticipate a surge in proponents of awarding credit for non-collegiate learning of various new types. The most common current example is StraighterLine. At \$99 per month plus \$39 per course, StraighterLine offers students the on-line opportunity to take a variety of common freshman classes, and over 20 partner colleges that take some or 'many' StraighterLine courses for credit.

We can anticipate that once MITx is up and running, some institutions will grant credit for an MITx certificate demonstrating competency in, say, differential equations. The question here might well be: Why not?

As with transfer credits, awarding AP credits, and credit for good scores on the CLEP exams, institutions are well advised to validate the award of credit. Do students who earn credit by or through another institution or organization demonstrate success in more advanced courses?

**Teacher education can illustrate how the current expectations for accreditation, the changes in the higher**

**education landscape, and intentional actions on the part of institutions and programs can come together.**

Increased understanding of how students learn can pay double dividends in teacher education by increasing the content focus on how K-12 student learn as well as giving university faculty better tools to help improve programs for prospective teachers. Indeed, given the above conditions and trends, teacher education is uniquely positioned to demonstrate the importance of higher education programs having sufficient autonomy to make the enterprise of education and its quality assurance more thoughtful and more responsive to the public interest.

Teacher education – that higher education enterprise most buffeted by external demands – might begin by conducting a self-examination in light of the above (and other) trends and forecasts. Recent major reform efforts in teacher education – and here it must be said that Frank Murray has been at the lead in all of them – have focused on key aspects of this most important enterprise. The Holmes Group sought to involve research universities, including their provosts and arts and sciences colleagues, in the serious business of preparing teachers; strengthened ties with schools, in the form of professional development schools, was at the heart of the reform. With Dan Fallon as the key partner, Project 30 focused on strengthening the links between arts and sciences and teacher education. And TEAC, an accreditation system based on an academic audit, has focused intensely on the use of evidence and data in making the public statement that a program is worthy of public trust because it is accredited. In all of these undertakings, Frank Murray knew that public trust in teacher education relied upon three things: 1) the commitment of research

universities; 2) partnerships with arts and sciences to assure teacher preparation in the subject matter; and 3) a publicly demonstrated reliance on data and evidence not traditionally associated with teacher education.

There remains a category of data not typically well represented in teacher education programs, and as the above discussion may illustrate, the timing is right for this focus to emerge. A teacher education program focused more deliberately on how people learn would represent something of a departure as programs that prepare teachers have traditionally focused more on the behavior of teachers than on helping prospective teachers understand how students learn.

Teacher behavior, classroom setting, social conditions are all given greater attention in most teacher preparation programs than is the focus on individual or small groups of students engaged in the work (and joy) of learning. Many assessment systems focus on how well (prospective) teachers know their subject matter and their pedagogical skills, an approach that does not automatically include a deep understanding of developmental psychology, how students learn, human variation in learning, and content-specific ways of knowing. Indeed, the new interest in judging teacher education programs by how well pupils learn from newly prepared teachers, while sensible on one level, runs the risk of the unintended consequence of further narrowing teacher education programs so that they (only) prepare teachers who can help their students do well on standardized tests.

Imagine an analogous emphasis in medical education: What results would we expect from training doctors by focusing on the

desired behavior of physicians, health care regulations, the sociology of hospital settings, bedside manner, and arranging the doctor's office – all without providing a solid foundation in the sciences and focusing on understanding the individual patient? Being a bit irreverent here, we might get Dr. Nick, perhaps, from *The Simpsons*, or Dr. Spaceman from *30 Rock*.

On a more serious note, to further illustrate the difference in approaches and emphases between medicine and teacher education, a Google search for “characteristics of effective doctors” yielded 4 results, while a search for “characteristics of effective teachers” produced 194,000 results. This emphasis on the “characteristics of effective teachers” is a reflection of a teacher-centered and not learner-centered approach to teacher education.

The question here for accreditors is whether institutions and programs have regular and effective means of helping faculty understand how their students learn. And for teacher education programs, whether those programs help their students – candidates to become teachers – understand how the children and young people they aspire to teach learn. The academy is gaining knowledge every day about how people learn, and it behooves teacher education programs to lead the way in incorporating this knowledge into their curriculum and assessment methods.

Anyone who has heard Frank describe Piagetian experiments or who has seen one of his course syllabi can see that, once again, Frank is ahead of the game here.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example: <http://www.udel.edu/fmurray/edst823.html>







*What Future for Accreditation:  
The Challenge and Opportunity of the  
Accreditation – Federal Government  
Relationship*

*– Judith S. Eaton*

*This paper addresses an emerging challenge to accreditation and its fundamental values of institutional autonomy, academic freedom and institutional mission. To the extent that the paper frames a major challenge, focuses on our core values and offers solutions, it reflects what many of us have gained from Frank Murray’s work and many contributions. I have learned much from Frank over the years, especially the importance of facing issues squarely, the need for resolve in the face of challenge, the importance of the values that drive our work and the urgency of courage to take action.*

*\* Introduction*

A major influence reshaping the work of accreditation is its relationship with the federal government. In particular, government

actions during the past six years are significantly altering the role that accreditation plays in the society, its work with colleges, universities and programs, its processes and, above all, its values and the values of higher education. Given accreditation's influence as higher education's primary means of assuring and improving academic quality, much is at stake.

Until recently, the role, key features and values of accreditation have been relatively stable, dating back to the formation of the first accrediting organizations in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Accreditation was left to accrediting organizations and the colleges, universities and programs that created and funded these bodies for purposes of self-review and improvement. Professionals judged professionals. As a mechanism for internal accountability, accreditation was a complex and nuanced process, formative in judgment, relying often on qualitative analysis and carefully deliberative before pronouncing that institutional or programmatic efforts to improve were unsuccessful.

As the number of accrediting organizations grew over time, the enterprise went from the review of a small group of public and private nonprofit colleges and universities to include more and more institutions and programs and the for-profit higher education sector. Eighty-five recognized accrediting organizations are currently operating, with more than 7,500 institutions and 20,000 programs enjoying accredited status. Institutional mission became central to judging quality and accreditation demonstrated significant flexibility and capacity for innovation in higher education, responding to the emergence of community colleges, the advent of distance learning, the powerful impact of technology on teaching and learning and, most recently, internationalization.

But it has been the relationship into which accreditation entered with the federal government in the early 1950s that has proved most consequential with regard to accreditation's stability and operation. Often referred to as "gatekeeping," this relationship involves a partnership where accreditation is considered in federal law to be a "reliable authority" on academic quality, required for access to federal student aid and other funds. In order for a college, university or program to be eligible for federal money, it must be accredited by an institutional or programmatic accreditor that has been "recognized" by the federal government. Recognition is a process by which government, through the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), scrutinizes and judges accrediting organizations on a periodic basis for their capacity to serve as these reliable authorities.

### *✧ Public accountability and the reshaping of accreditation*

The current driving force for government with regard to accreditation is an expectation of robust public accountability. "Public accountability" is about higher education and accreditation answering to external actors such as government, employers, students and the public. It may be contrasted with the internal accountability that has been typical of higher education for centuries and is why accreditation was created. Public accountability means that internal accountability, academics reviewing academics as the hallmark of accreditation, is now perceived as insufficient. Higher education has always had an external, public accountability obligation. The change here is that external accountability has eclipsed internal accountability in importance.

Public accountability has emerged in an environment where “higher education” typically no longer evokes an image of a pristine college campus with young men and women studying full time. Higher education is now more often captured by a single parent who “goes to college” by sitting in front of the computer at 10:00 p.m. at the end of a long day of work. In this environment, the role of colleges and universities is to educate increasing numbers of the population for work and credentialing, is integrated into daily life and work, and is available full- and part-time 24/7 through online learning and other technologies.

As a dominant theme of the federal government, public accountability is one of the few areas of agreement that cuts across political parties and is also embraced by the press and pundits. It includes expectations that higher education will enhance transparency, providing more readily accessible and easily understandable information to the public about the performance of institutions and achievement of students. It is about attention to what students accomplish as central to judgment about the worth of a college or university education. It is about the public and government being better informed about the use of public funds to finance higher education.

The pressure on the accreditation enterprise is intense. The potential for significant transformation is great, in contrast to many years of a more placid pace of change that did not challenge the accreditation fundamentals – peer review, self-regulation, emphasis on institutional mission and responsible institutional independence as central to judging quality.

This most recent public accountability emphasis began with the 2005-2006 Commission on the Future of Higher Education established by the U.S. Secretary of Education. The report issued by the commission was decidedly critical of both higher education and accreditation in a number of areas, including accountability. It contributed to the reshaping of accreditation by calls for greater transparency, especially with regard to student learning outcomes and information to the public. It offered a very public criticism of accreditation as weak and not improving quality. It urged much greater involvement of the government in academics.

The commission report had a significant impact on the subsequent reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (2008) and the accompanying regulations issued in 2009, 2010, and 2011. The law's revisions added to the reshaping of accreditation by expanding government authority over the conduct of the accreditation process: how appeals were handled, the extent of confidentiality and the opportunity for litigation. It moved the government into academic areas such as defining a student credit hour, requiring institutional transfer of credit policies and textbook policies and setting expectations of student achievement. At the same time, USDE was scrutinizing accrediting organization operation at a level of detail unseen in the past. Both the Congress and USDE were more heavily engaged in areas of academic judgments heretofore the traditional province of academic faculty.

The net impact was a shifting of more and more responsibility and authority for academic quality from accreditors and institutions to the federal government.

## ✧ *What to do about the reshaping: Addressing misalignment*

The reshaping of accreditation has surfaced a significant misalignment between accreditation as it has been traditionally practiced and current public accountability demands. Unless this can be addressed, the core practices of accreditation as well as its fundamental values may be overtaken, perhaps replaced with a national system that may be standardized and relies primarily on quality review through government.

It is not enough, apparently, for accreditation to (1) be answerable to institutions and programs that are reviewed (self-regulation), (2) make extensive use of peer review, (3) provide some but not all information to the public, (4) rely heavily on qualitative judgment about academic quality and (5) sustain a mission-based approach to quality that may not readily lend itself to standardization of expected results. Critics tend to overlook the value of accreditation especially with regard to quality improvement and to ignore the substantial contribution of accreditation to the growth and development of the higher education enterprise.

In the name of public accountability, accreditation is expected to play a consumer protection role that is misaligned with a peer-driven, nuanced system of quality review focused on improvement of higher education. Accredited status signals the legitimacy and reliability of a college or university and builds public confidence about higher education. However, today's expectations of consumer protection

are about providing instant information, ideally electronically, that is summative, apparently uncomplicated, often quantitative and standardized, offering the consumer “bright lines” by which to make judgments. Rankings are an example. Accreditation, in contrast, relies on formative judgments. The standards call for evidence, often qualitative, that cannot be judged by bright lines and that relies on the mission of an institution and professional judgment, making standardization unrealistic. Consumer protection is important and valuable, but current expectations of up-or-down judgments are not effectively met using accreditation as the vehicle to achieve this goal.

Doing something about reshaping accreditation means resolving this misalignment. Given the likely continued importance of public accountability, the challenge is to address means to respond to expectations – but in ways that do not diminish the valued core features of this enterprise. It is vital that the accreditation community take steps to at least strongly influence if not lead such changes. Actions in four areas are essential.

**First, we need to step up our advocacy for accreditation.**

Accreditation’s overall performance for more than a century has been part of the creation of a higher education enterprise that is unsurpassed in both access and quality, whatever its limitations. Peer review is effective. Self-regulation works. The values on which accreditation is built and which it reflects – the centrality of institutional mission, institutional autonomy and academic freedom – have been fundamental to the past successes of higher education and remain critical to future successes. If we do not make the case for the values and effectiveness of our enterprise, who will?

This advocacy needs to draw attention to the compelling role that accreditation plays in society. As the primary signal of the basic academic acceptability of colleges, universities or programs, students, the public, and the government rely heavily on accreditation. “Is it accredited?” is often the first question of prospective students and their families, employers, and foundations when deciding to attend or invest in a college or university. It is the first question of institutions examining the prior education of students seeking to transfer or to enter graduate school. As indicated above, accredited status is a requirement for receipt of federal funds, totaling some \$175 billion per year at this time.

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), for a number of years, has urged greater public awareness of the extent to which the society already relies on accreditation as one means to emphasize its value and credibility. The CHEA *Initiative*, a national dialogue on the future of accreditation underway since 2008, has worked to make the case for the richness and worth of accreditation review, emphasizing the depth and comprehensiveness of the process. At the same time, the *Initiative* discussions have stressed the difference between accreditation and the consumer protection expectations described above, committed to the view that forcing current expectations on accreditation will undermine its values and its effectiveness. Throughout the dialogue, CHEA has pressed accreditation to further address public accountability, but not at the press of diminishing reliance on peer review and the goal of quality improvement.

**Second, both the academic and accreditation communities need to emphasize the importance of our**



**tradition of leadership for academic quality carried out at the institutional level.** Public accountability, focusing on national or federal issues, is coming in conflict with the successful tradition of institutional leadership. Heretofore, we have turned to colleges and universities for what counts as effective education, judgment about student achievement and determination of paths to success in teaching, learning and research. With government oversight expanding into the academic arena, the role of institutions is diminished as government oversight replaces these judgments. The focus on public accountability at a federal or national policy level intensifies, thus ignoring institutions. Students, however, are not looking for national policy studies or aggregate national data about higher education. Instead, students want to know about specific institutions: “What will happen if I attend Fantastic U? Galactic U? What is the likelihood of graduating, transferring, getting a job?”

**Third, accreditation needs to more fully engage the public accountability imperative in order to influence it.** We need a stronger voice. Efforts over the years to ignore the growing emphasis on public accountability – and there have been many - have proved futile. Initiatives that attempted to essentially finesse accountability using assessment have not succeeded. The public is interested in disclosure, not assessment. Disagreements within our own community have also been a significant barrier. A utilitarian approach to higher education now dominates and needs to be challenged. We are leaving our future up to others by refusing to lead. The price of failing to act with regard to accountability continues to grow.

Society expects universal access to higher education. This expectation is accompanied by consumer-like interest in what higher

education is supposed to provide. Degrees are valued mainly to the extent to which they result in good-paying jobs, with less concern for expanding intellectual capacity. If colleges and universities are failing to graduate students or assist with the achievement of other education goals, they are viewed as inadequate. Where at one time the society valued higher education as an opportunity and valued open access even if it did not always result in academic success, this is no more. Two especially vital commitments are losing salience: the value of education as intellectual development and the value of educational opportunity for all, even when some will not succeed.

As we take a major step toward greater responsiveness to public accountability, we need to find a way to maintain the benefits of accreditation, including our commitment to peer review and a mission-driven system, institutional autonomy and academic freedom. At the same time, we need to provide more information to the public about our performance and what counts as basic academic effectiveness. We need this framed in a manner that turns the tide with regard to the utilitarian approach to higher education that dominates the public accountability discussion.

We can make significant progress with both emphasizing institutional leadership and engaging public accountability by, for example, each college or university agreeing to a short list of performance indicators, developing evidence with regard to success in achieving these results and publishing this information. This might include information about graduation, achievement of other educational goals, transfer, entry to graduate school and, where appropriate, job placement. This effort would assure more attention

to student learning and transparency, two key demands of public accountability. It would provide the public with a better sense of the likely results of investing in a college education. It would not interfere with the work of faculty and their academic freedom. It would leave judgment about student achievement where it belongs – with our faculty.

**Fourth, we need to reflect on the strategies we use to influence government policy.** For the most part, both the academic and accreditation communities have approached the emphasis on public accountability by learning what government wishes to do and attempting to accommodate in a way that minimizes likely negative impact on what we do. This has not been working with regard to accreditation. The reshaping is too great, too fundamental for a more incremental approach. What is discussed above – a program of strong advocacy for accreditation, a renewed commitment to the role of institutional leadership, along with developing public accountability that works for accreditation – can figure effectively into our influencing.

## *Summary*

The academic and accreditation communities are confronted with the most substantial challenge to accreditation, perhaps in its history. The sixty years of accreditation’s relationship with government has reached a point where the government’s role is expanding significantly and reshaping the accreditation enterprise. During the past six years of concern with public accountability, the federal role in both judging

academic quality and direct management of accreditation has grown to the point that it dominates traditional peer review and institutional leadership for academic quality.

Public accountability carries expectations that accreditation will be first and foremost accountable to external actors rather than higher education community – professionals judging professionals. Discussions about accountability convey a strong preference for quantitative, summative, utilitarian-driven evaluation of quality in contrast to the typical formative, qualitative peer review that is characteristic of accreditation. It conveys a strong interest in national standards, if not standardization itself. This is incompatible with the fundamentals of accreditation.

The accreditation and academic communities cannot allow this situation to develop further. Four actions can be helpful in seizing the initiative with regard to public accountability in order to assure that we do not pay the price of loss of the fundamental features and values of accreditation – institutional autonomy, academic freedom and institutional mission. We need advocacy for accreditation that reflects the urgency of the moment. We need to blunt the challenges to the robust role of institutional leadership for academic quality. We need to play a more effective role in framing what public accountability means and how it is carried out. Finally, we need to reflect on the strategies that we use to engage government in the public accountability discussion, seeking fresh approaches that enable to sustain accreditation while also responding to the environment in which higher education and accreditation are operating.



*Disciplining Peer Review:  
Addressing Some Deficiencies in U.S.  
Accreditation Practices*

— *Peter T. Ewell*

The U.S. approach to assuring quality in higher education, embodied in the institutional accreditation process, differs substantially from the way this function is carried out in most other countries. For the most part, quality assurance elsewhere takes place under ministerial control – largely because most postsecondary institutions are public. Accreditation in the U.S., in contrast, is at least nominally a voluntary process and is neither operated nor paid for by government. Similarly, the principal purpose of quality assurance elsewhere is to provide evidence that public money is spent effectively and to provide consumer information on the basis of which potential students can determine where to enroll. The principal purpose of U.S. accreditation is less clear because accreditors claim to simultaneously assure quality and to help institutions improve. Another significant difference between U.S. accreditation and quality assurance elsewhere is the central place of peer review. While peer review is used to some extent elsewhere, much of the substance of quality review outside the U.S. is undertaken by quality agency staff or by semi-professional reviewers.

I chose the topic of peer review for my contribution to Frank Murray's *Festschrift* because TEAC's use of an audit approach to quality review first got me thinking concretely about alternatives to U.S. accreditation's well-worn design. I was dissatisfied with many aspects of peer review as the main basis for making judgments about academic quality and, through both direct experience and the work of such quality assurance scholars as David Dill and Bill Massy, was growing ever more familiar with the academic audit (Dill, Williams, Massy, and Cook, 1996). But I was equally convinced that peer review, done rigorously and well, both symbolized and embodied the assumption of collective professional responsibility for quality on the part of the academy and was a sound review technique in some important areas. My intent in this essay, therefore, is to briefly but systematically explore the merits and drawbacks of peer review as a quality assurance tool in the current higher education context and to suggest areas where the process can be improved.<sup>1</sup>

### ✧ *Some background*

Although institutional accreditation has been around for more than a century in the U.S., the current dominant model of a mission-based process featuring a self-study followed by a site visit by a

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<sup>1</sup> My primary referent in this essay is institutional, not specialized/programmatic accreditation, primarily centered in the seven regional commissions. Specialized accreditors certainly make heavy use of peer review and might benefit from some of these observations and suggestions, but they are also beholden to specific stakeholder communities and have specific (often quantitative) standards of performance that buffer the absolute dominance of peers that now characterizes regional accreditation.

team of peers over a ten-year cycle evolved gradually from the 1930s through the 1950s (Ewell, 2008). This model, pioneered by the North Central Association, replaced review against quantitative criteria with minimum standards of performance that addressed degree awards, the breadth and depth of programs, faculty numbers and qualifications, library and academic support, physical facilities, and fiscal condition. Minimum standards such as these, of course, were relatively easy to apply and institutions frequently were examined by only one reviewer in the course of a single day. The shift to a new model centered on peer review was driven by a number of factors. First, the scope of regional accreditation had by this point expanded to include a far more diverse array of institutions including less selective colleges, normal schools, and (later) community colleges. This meant that a single set of quantitative standards were not flexible enough to support meaningful judgments of quality. At the same time, the posture of accreditation shifted gradually from a compliance-oriented minimum standards approach to one emphasizing institutional improvement. Peer review was, in theory, ideally situated to meet these new conditions because institutional diversity required reviewers drawn from all kinds of backgrounds and capable of bringing considerable practical experience to the process. At the same time, peer reviewers could use their experience to help institutions improve.<sup>2</sup>

The result was what some observers have called the “Golden Age” of accreditation during which regional accreditors operated an increasingly regularized process without any connection with government (Bloland, 2001). This situation shifted decisively with

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<sup>2</sup> A change signaled by NCA's beginning to call its peer reviewers “consultant evaluators” at that time.

passage of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 which, in essence, “deputized” accreditation to govern institutional eligibility for federal financial aid funds. Accordingly, accreditors have since then been mandated by the Department of Education to inspect institutional compliance with a steadily growing list of federal requirements. Peer review did not change. But the kinds of questions that peers were expected to pose about institutional condition and performance became steadily more complex, putting increasing strain on the process as a result.

### ✧ *The case for peer review*

The observation has been made more than once that if the U.S. were establishing a national quality assurance system for higher education from scratch, we would not design the one based on regional accreditation that we now have. Would such a purpose-built alternative have a central role for peer review? In addressing this question, it is helpful to begin by reviewing the things that peer review does well and that ought to be preserved.

The strongest case for review by peers is that they can bring to bear considerable expertise, drawn from experience, about what a “high quality” institution of higher education ought to look like. When the array of institutions under review was fairly homogeneous – as, arguably, it was until the 1980s – this was a powerful argument. Distance and asynchronous instructional delivery were in their infancy and proprietary institutions enrolled comparative small numbers of students. When atypical institutions were encountered, moreover,



peer reviewers could be selected from institutions that resembled those under review. A related argument is that peer review provides a visible embodiment of the assumption of collective responsibility for self-governance owed by any profession that serves society. While this is far more active and visible in the realm of scholarship, where peer review is essential, it constitutes a persuasive case that the accreditation process assures the quality and integrity of the academy as a whole, beyond just guaranteeing the integrity of individual colleges and universities.

Other arguments in support of peer review center on the quality improvement role of accreditation. If selected appropriately and allowed the opportunity to provide advice with candor, peer reviewers can actively help colleges and universities get better through constructive feedback. At the same time, peer reviewers can help disseminate good practices by taking what they learn in the course of a review back to their own campuses for local application. Although this does not always occur in the course of an accreditation visit, such efforts to cross-fertilize good practice are welcome and productive.

Finally, an approach based on peer review is fairly cheap, at least with respect to direct cost. The bulk of the time invested by peer reviewers is contributed service as the regionals pay reviewers only nominal sums to undertake substantial commitments examining materials and visiting campuses. Alternative quality assurance systems based on professional reviewers, as are typical in other countries, must invest heavily in personnel costs and the costs associated with the development of a review infrastructures.

## ✧ *Drawbacks of peer review*

Though arguably well suited to an age when U.S. higher education was smaller and more homogeneous, at least two changes in the environment within which it must operate pose escalating challenges to accreditation's heavy dependence on peer review. The first is technical: judging the quality of colleges and universities appropriately today requires levels of knowledge about important topics that typical peer reviewers do not possess. The second is political: in the age of heightened accountability best symbolized by the Secretary's Commission on the Future of Higher Education (popularly known as the "Spellings Commission"), a process based on peer review looks like an inherent conflict of interest because those who judge performance are drawn from the same community that is being judged (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Together, these challenges have combined to yield a number of specific drawbacks of peer review that are becoming ever more apparent.

Accrediting organizations do take pains to match the characteristics of peer reviewers with those of the institutions that they will be asked to examine. But colleges and universities have become sufficiently complex organizations that it is difficult to find random members of the academic community who really understand how they function. Admittedly, the practicing administrators who generally constitute up to half of a given accreditation team have amassed a good deal of on-the-job knowledge about institutional functioning at their own institutions. But this background is not equivalent in either breadth or depth to that of an individual whose scholarship is focused on organizational or management effectiveness in college and university

settings – for example, a faculty member in a Ph.D. program in Higher Education. Lack of technical background and expertise possessed by peer reviewers is even more acute in specific areas of institutional functioning like interpreting and acting on disaggregated graduation and retention data or evidence about the achievement of student learning outcomes. As these topics become ever more prominent in accreditation, accreditors are struggling to find peer reviewers in their regions with the technical background to examine them. Other specialized skill areas like finance or student recruitment, in contrast, have a much larger pool of institutional staff from which to draw. In parallel, most peer reviewers are not well suited to examine the many areas of compliance with federal regulations that the Department of Education currently expects of them.

Part of the reason for this condition is that peer reviewers in U.S. accreditation receive relatively little dedicated training on how to conduct a review compared to the reviewers and auditors who staff quality assurance processes in other countries. Although this is beginning to change, most visiting team members only attend a day-long (or even half a day) orientation session before being deployed for review. This contrasts with the multi-day (and occasionally as long as a week) training regimens experienced by quality auditors in Europe or Australasia. As a result, peer review “training” in the U.S. context must necessarily be largely confined to familiarization with the accreditor’s standards and policies, and going over the specifics of the upcoming visit.

Just as important as gaps in substantive knowledge, most peer reviewers lack many of the skills needed to **conduct** an effective

review. This is first apparent in most accreditation visits by the relatively rudimentary techniques that are typically used to gather evidence in the course of a site visit – direct inspection and document review, and group interviews conducted by dyads or triads of peer reviewers with institutional faculty and staff grouped by function. While both may be guided by general questions prepared in advance by the team, they are far less sophisticated than the kinds of research protocols used in sociological or anthropological studies. An equally important set of skills centers on interpreting evidence and coming to conclusions about the extent to which quality standards are met. One problem here is that most peer review teams are overscheduled when they visit campuses and, as a result, fail to devote the necessary time to discussions amongst themselves about the evidence they have collected and what it means. Another problem is the fact that when these discussions do occur, they tend to be unscripted. Consequently, vocal team members with strong opinions tend to get more air time than their equally informed, but more reticent, colleagues and strong team chairs can exert undue influence on conclusions simply by virtue of their prominence.

Uneven knowledge and limited training contribute to another significant deficiency of the use of peer review in accreditation: lack of consistency in the outcomes of reviews. The perception that the outcomes of accreditation visits depend more on the composition of the review team than the actual elements of institutional condition or performance being examined is widespread among institutional leaders, for example (CHEA, 2006). Especially prevalent is the complaint that team members hold unfavorable views of an institution's arrangements or practices if they differ markedly from the

way these things look “back home” at the reviewers’ own institutions. These observations underscore the vulnerability of any assessment process based on individual perception conducted in the absence of explicit decision criteria or rubrics: the magnitude of variation across observers frequently renders the process unacceptably unreliable.

A final deficiency of the use of peer review in accreditation is that the evidence that fellow academics provide is not balanced by viewpoints outside the academy. In contrast, external viewpoints are common in the quality assurance regimens applied to venues like health care or financial services. One important group that is missing in higher education review comprises stakeholders. These include students, employers who will hire the institution’s graduates, and the graduate schools who will admit them for further study. A similarly important group is members of the public, who count on the competence of a given college’s graduates in a range of roles and settings. To be sure, all institutional accrediting commissions have a few public members. But their role is too limited to overshadow widespread and long standing concerns that peer review is “inside baseball” and is riddled with conflict of interest (Newman, 1973).

### ✧ *What could be done?*

Some observers have claimed that peer review’s significant deficiencies render it unsuitable as a quality assurance tool. But I believe that dropping it would go too far because, done well, it has much to contribute to both the practice of accreditation and the public perceptions of professional self-regulation on which widespread trust

in the academy depend. Instead, calling on institutions and accrediting organizations to take specific steps to improve the peer review process – to “discipline” it, if you will – might help alleviate its most prominent deficiencies. The most important of these steps include:

- **Training.** Not surprisingly, I believe that more extensive training of peer reviewers would help a lot. Bringing the amount and frequency of training events up to the level typically experienced by auditors employed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the United Kingdom, for example – multi-day events including simulations and role-playing exercises – would be a good first step. And training of this kind should not be a one-time event, but should instead involve periodic “refresher” sessions conducted in depth every few years, as well as one-day reorientation sessions that should occur before teams are deployed on a visit. In addition to extending the duration of training events, moreover, the *focus* of training needs to be more active and intentional. Instead of just covering topical content like what an accreditor’s standards and policies are about, training events need to devote considerable time to actively *practicing* common review techniques. These should include directed interviewing and participant observation, as well as examining typical institutional documents like strategic plans, committee minutes, or assessment reports. Combinations of face-to-face and on-line training events could allow participation in training to be enhanced and expanded without excessive additional cost.

- **Reorganize review processes.** Peer reviewers are also better at some things than others. As a result, it makes a lot of sense to restructure review processes to deploy peer reviewers on topics like faculty capacity and curriculum organization where faculty peer reviewers can be assumed to be knowledgeable, and use expert reviewers instead to examine topics like student success (retention and graduation) or the assessment of student learning outcomes where the typical faculty peer reviewer has less knowledge and background. This is already done in the area of financial adequacy, where dedicated members of the review team with special backgrounds in public or private institutional finance are typically used. Following this advice, several regional accreditors are establishing expert review panels on some of these topics.<sup>3</sup> These panels conduct parallel reviews of selected topics off-site and report their judgments to the commission directly.
- **Clearly distinguish quality assurance from institutional improvement.** Institutional accreditation in the U.S. has always claimed a dual role for the process: it examines and certifies quality, while the review process provides important feedback on the basis of which institutions can improve what they do. If chosen appropriately to fit the topics or domains addressed by a self-study, peer reviewers are a good deal more appropriate and helpful in the role

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<sup>3</sup> The most prominent current examples are the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Senior Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

of providing feedback than they are in assuring quality. Accordingly, clearly distinguishing which aspects of a given review are assigned to which role would help those in charge of a review assign tasks. In my view, consulting and providing feedback can appropriately be assigned to peer reviewers, while more bright-line quality judgments are more appropriately guided by statistical performance measures conducted by expert review panels.

- **Increase staff presence in on-site reviews.** Agency staff members accompany peer review teams when they visit institutions at all accrediting organizations but the frequency with which this occurs varies a good deal. Some accreditors include staff on almost all site visits, while others do so for only a few visits or for only the first day of a multi-day site visit. Including staff is generally a good idea because their greater knowledge and experience with what happens in the course of a review can enable them to focus team attention on the right issues, can return a wandering team to the central task, or can help the team interpret evidence. Just as a “jury of peers” in a court of law requires advice and occasional intervention by a presiding judge, staff presence during a site visit can help guide the process of coming to judgment about the results of a review.
- **Create more and better tools for reviewing quality.** As noted earlier, most peer review teams use only a couple of relatively simple techniques like group interviews or document inspection to gather evidence during site visits. The effectiveness of these could be improved by developing



protocols or rubrics and training observers to use them. In addition, the reach and reliability of evidence gathering could be greatly enhanced by adopting additional observational tools drawn from the social sciences. For example, “mini-surveys” consisting of a few closed-ended questions can be deployed in large group meetings at the outset, with results tabulated quickly by one member of the team and posted to better structure the discussion. This helps to avoid the dominance of only a few voices that tends to occur during such sessions. Similarly, fieldwork protocols based on anthropological research can be developed for use by a designated member of the team, whose assignment is to circulate on the campus systematically to observe typical interactions and practices. A parallel set of tools could be devised on how to organize site visits. One topic here might be guidance on how the team should budget its time on campus to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for reflection, discussion, and coming to judgment. Another topic might be procedures for drawing conclusions about various aspects of institutional condition or performance based on approaches like nominal group technique that allow the team to move beyond “groupthink” and opinion dominance by a few vocal members.

A non-trivial objection that can be made to adopting any of these enhancements to the review process is that they would add cost. But membership costs and costs associated with reviews already vary substantially across regional accreditors. This suggests that some institutions appear to be willing to bear higher costs so long as they

believe they are receiving accurate and reliable reviews conducted using more elaborate evidence-gathering procedures. Moreover, many of these costs could be covered by reallocating expenses away from components of the current institutional accreditation process that may add little value. For example, the traditional voluminous self-study consumes significant amounts of staff time for institutions under review, but is largely descriptive; in many regions it is already being displaced by much more focused reports on various topics organized around concrete evidence. Consequent savings in staff time could allow institutions to afford modest increases in membership fees and visit costs.

## ✧ *Getting there*

Most aspects of higher education are notoriously difficult to change and accreditation is no exception. So while some experimentation is beginning to occur in response to widespread complaints about accreditation's cost and its perceived shortfalls in discharging an increasingly prominent role in accountability, some thought needs to be devoted to how the recommended changes in peer review outlined above can best be implemented.

First, despite the surface appeal of externally-induced "blunt instrument" approaches advanced through the recognition process administered by the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) or the negotiated rule-making process associated with the HEOA, I believe that it is best to let the academy

take the initiative. Most college and university leaders now believe that proactive change is in the best interest of their institutions and of the academy as a whole, lest unwanted and ill-advised changes be mandated from the outside. The Task Force on Accreditation convened by the American Council on Education (ACE), for example, calls upon the national presidential associations to ask the regional accreditation organizations to implement these changes, even though the result may be a more rigorous review process that may uncover institutional shortcomings (ACE, 2012). At least half the regionals, meanwhile, have rolled out new standards and review processes. Some of these involve substantial changes in the role of peer review and more are under consideration.

Second, consistent with one of the recommendations of the ACE Task Force, much could be accomplished by accreditors examining one another's practices and engaging in mutually beneficial dialogue about how to make them better (ACE, 2012). Although I believe strongly that review criteria and practices need to be better aligned across regions, one virtue of having seven independent commissions is that it allows a lot of experimentation to take place. For example, at least one of the regionals – the Senior Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) has already adopted a review approach that assigns the task of examining institutional performance with respect to student success (retention and graduation rates) and student learning outcomes to expert panels in preference to peer reviewers. If this practice proves successful and if other accreditors can learn about it, other regionals might well change their practices in this direction. In the past, dialogue and mutual adoption has led to greater commonality. For example, all seven regionals have adopted review criteria originally developed by the Western Cooperative for

Educational Technology (WCET) and they have all aligned their criteria for institutional eligibility.

Finally, establishing a mechanism for accreditors to document and disseminate good practices on a national basis would help a lot. Given its mission, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) would be a good host for this and CHEA has already played this role in a couple of other arenas. One such project proposed a set of documented data elements, together with definitions and recommended sources, which all accreditors could use for institutional reporting (CHEA, 2000). Extending this by creating an easy-to-access “toolkit” containing techniques intended to enhance the effectiveness of peer review, together with orientation and training sessions given at CHEA and regional annual meetings, might constitute a helpful contribution.

Neither of these two suggestions, of course, guarantees widespread adoption of these practices and pursuing them remains a set of decisions that must be made by each accrediting organization independently. But better documentation and enhanced and dissemination of these practices on a more systematic and coordinated national basis appears promising.

## ✧ *Final thoughts*

Peer review as an element of higher education quality assurance and as a central feature of institutional accreditation in the U.S. has vociferous supporters and critics. The former see peer review as the symbolic embodiment of self-regulation and as an effective tool for

assuring quality as well as guiding improvement. The latter maintain that peer review is increasingly out of date given vast increases in the complexity of colleges and universities and would like to see it de-emphasized in favor of more “professional” approaches. My own view is in between. Peer review is good at some things and not very good at others. By carefully choosing the aspects of institutional condition and performance at which it is directed to match its strengths, and by designing tools to bolster its effectiveness in settings where this is possible, this time honored centerpiece of U.S. accreditation can indeed be “disciplined.”

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Earlier, she was founding dean of the College of Education at Zayed University in the UAE and worked in Turkey on a World Bank project. At the University of Rhode Island she served as Dean of the College of Human Science and Services, Director of the Curriculum Research and Development Center, Dean of University Libraries, and Professor of Education.

She has spoken and written widely on accreditation, assessment, and evaluation. Currently she serves on the Committee on Recognition for the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA); the Quality Board for Higher Education in Iceland; the board of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation; and the Task Force on the Future of Institutional Accreditation, American Council on Education. She has served on the boards of five U.S. accreditation organizations.

✧ **SANDRA B. COHEN** joined the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education faculty in 1975 as part of the Special Education Program after receiving her doctorate at Georgia State University. Having been one of the first special education resource teachers in the country, Cohen's academic

teaching focus has continued to be in the area of instructional procedures for students with mild disabilities. She has authored numerous articles, chapters, manuals, and books related to instructional strategies and has been the PI or Co-PI on seven funded grants. Since 1996, Cohen has been the Director of Teacher Education for the Curry School with responsibility for overseeing all initial licensure programs in the areas of elementary, secondary, and special education. In this capacity, she has worked with local school divisions, off-grounds teacher education programs, and the Virginia DOE Teacher Education and Licensure unit. Her current responsibilities also include directing all teacher education accreditation and program approval activities for the Curry School. Cohen is a member of the TEAC Board of Directors (and served as Chair from 2009 to 2010) and is a member of the Board of Directors for the newly-formed Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

✳ **JUDITH S. EATON** is president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the largest institutional higher education membership organization in the United States. A national advocate and institutional voice for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation, CHEA is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities.

CHEA works with the presidents and chief academic officers of colleges and universities, accreditors, policy makers, and higher education leaders around the world, providing authoritative information and leadership on issues related to accreditation and quality assurance, the federal government-accreditation relationship and enhancing public confidence in accreditation. CHEA is the only private sector body in the United States that “recognizes” U.S. institutional and programmatic accreditors for quality, scrutinizing these organizations and affirming that they meet CHEA’s quality standards. At present, 60 accreditors are CHEA-recognized.

Prior to her work at CHEA, Eaton served as chancellor of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, where she was responsible for leadership and coordination of 32 institutions serving more than 162,000 students statewide. Previously, she was president of the Council for Aid to Education,



Community College of Philadelphia, and the Community College of Southern Nevada, and served as vice president of the American Council on Education. She also has held full- and part-time teaching positions at Columbia University, the University of Michigan and Wayne State University.

A sought-after speaker on higher education issues both in the United States and internationally, Eaton currently serves on a range of boards and has authored numerous books and articles on higher education and accreditation topics.

✳ **PETER EWELL** is the Vice President at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), a research and development center founded to improve the management effectiveness of colleges and universities. A member of the staff since 1981, Ewell's work focuses on assessing institutional effectiveness and the outcomes of college, and involves both research and direct consulting with institutions and state systems on collecting and using assessment information in planning, evaluation, and budgeting. He has directed many projects on this topic, including initiatives funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the National Institute for Education, the Consortium for the Advancement of Private Higher Education, and The Pew Charitable Trusts. In addition, he has consulted with over 375 colleges and universities and more than thirty state or national governments internationally on topics including assessment, program review, enrollment management, and student retention. Ewell has authored seven books and numerous articles on the topic of improving undergraduate instruction through the assessment of student outcomes.

A graduate of Haverford College, Ewell received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Yale University in 1976 and was on the faculty of the University of Chicago.

✳ **DANIEL FALLON** retired in 2008 from Carnegie Corporation of New York, where he supervised grant making as Chair of the Education Division.

Among his other responsibilities at Carnegie, he designed and oversaw Carnegie's ambitious effort to improve the education of teachers, *Teachers for a New Era*.

Fallon is Professor Emeritus of Psychology and of Public Policy at the University of Maryland at College Park, where he also served as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. He held earlier appointments as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Colorado at Denver, and Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences and of Harpur College at Binghamton University.

Having graduated with a B.A. degree from Antioch College, Fallon received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Virginia in Experimental Psychology. He has published widely on learning and motivation, academic public policy, comparative higher education, and teacher education. He is the author of a prize winning book, *The German University: A Heroic Ideal in Conflict with the Modern World* (1980).

Fallon serves the German government as adviser to its excellence initiative for higher education, and is a member of the Board of Trustees of Hildesheim University and of Bochum University. He is Chair of the Board of Directors of the American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and is a member of the TEAC Board of Directors.

✳ **DONALD WARREN** is professor emeritus and university dean emeritus in the Indiana University School of Education. His recent publications examine episodes in American Indian history, slavery in the United States as an educational institution, and related historiographical topics. He has served as president of several scholarly associations, member of national commissions and task forces, and a founding member of the TEAC Board of Directors.

International activities have taken Warren to numerous countries, including lecture series and conference presentations in Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, India, Japan, Poland, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, and Vietnam.

✧ **JON F. WERGIN** is professor of educational studies in Antioch University's Ph.D. program in leadership and change. For nearly thirty years, he held faculty positions at Virginia Commonwealth University, serving in both administrative and faculty roles; while at VCU he won awards for both teaching (1996) and scholarship (1998). As a faculty member in the School of Education, he taught courses in adult and higher education and coordinated the Preparing Future Faculty for the Professions program through VCU's Graduate School. In 1992 he took a leave from VCU to be the founding director of the Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards within the American Association for Higher Education, and continued an active association with AAHE until 2004, focusing his scholarship on evaluation and change in academic departments. Wergin has books, monographs, and journal articles on such topics as professional education, assessment, and the restructuring of faculty work, including two articles in *Change* magazine on accreditation and student learning (2005). His most recent book is *Leadership in Place* (2007), about how faculty members and other academic professionals can have a greater impact on their own institutions.

Wergin is past divisional vice president of the American Educational Research Association (Division I), and has served as chief evaluator of two national centers for research in higher education. In 2003 he completed work on a project funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts aimed at integrating efforts to assess student learning by the eight regional accrediting associations. He is a member of the National Academy for Higher Education Leadership, and has consulted with scores of national associations, accrediting bodies, and colleges and universities, on issues related to evaluation and change in higher education. Wergin received his PhD in educational psychology in 1973 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

✧ **SUZANNE M. WILSON** is a University Distinguished Professor at Michigan State University, where she currently serves as Chair and Professor in the Department of Teacher Education. Her undergraduate degree is in history and American Studies from Brown University; she also has a M. S. in Statistics and a Ph.D. in Education from Stanford University. Prior to joining the faculty at MSU, Wilson was the first director of the Teacher Assessment

Project (PI, Lee Shulman), which developed prototype assessments for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Wilson served as a Commissioner on the Carnegie Commission on Mathematics and Science Education (2007-09), chaired the teacher quality subgroup, National Research Council/National Academy of Education Ed in '08 White Paper Project (2008-09), and has also served on several National Research Council committees, including the Teacher Preparation Study (2005-2009), Review and Assessment of the Health and Productivity Benefits of Green Schools (2005-06), and the Board on Science Education (2011 – present).

She has written on teacher knowledge, curriculum reform, educational policy, and teacher learning. Her current work concerns exploring various measures of teaching and teachers' understanding that might be used for teacher education and education research, as well as a study of the contemporary and jurisdictional battles over who should control teacher education and licensure.

Wilson is also a committed teacher, having taught undergraduate, MA, and doctoral classes in educational policy, teacher learning, and research methods. She has directed 20 dissertations, and is the advisor to over 20 doctoral students across the Department of Teacher Education and Education Policy Program.



## *Biographical Overview*

Frank B. Murray is H. Rodney Sharp Professor in the School of Education and in the Department of Psychology at the University of Delaware. Between 1998 and 2011, he was founding president of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) in Washington, DC, and he now chairs its board and the board of the newly formed Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) also in DC.

Between 1979 and 1995 he served as dean of the College of Education at the University of Delaware. He received his B.A. degree from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, and his M.A.T. and Ph.D. degrees from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. He has served in various capacities on the editorial boards of several journals in developmental and educational psychology and is a fellow in the American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Society, and the American Educational Research Association. He was Executive Director of the Holmes Partnership, and formerly he was chair of the National Board of its forerunner, the Holmes Group, a consortium of research universities engaged in educational reform. He was president and co-founder of the Project 30 Alliance, an organization of faculty in education and the liberal arts.

Between 1994 and 1997, he co-edited the *Review of Educational Research* for the American Educational Research Association. In 1996 he edited *The Teacher Educator's Handbook* for the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. For his contributions to the fields of child development and teacher education, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1994 and in 2009 he was elected to the laureate chapter of Kappa Delta Phi, an honor limited to 60 living scholars.

Frank has shared his professional life with his wife, Fiona, and his children Grahame and Meegan.



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- 1960-1961      Teacher, Gwyn Falls Junior High School, Baltimore, Maryland
- 1961            M.A.T., The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland; Departments of Education and History
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- 1966-1969      Assistant Professor, Department of Psychological Foundations, The University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota
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- 1971-1977      Director, Office of Graduate Studies in Education, The University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware

- 1974 Elected Fellow of Division 15 of the American Psychological Association
- 1975 Named H. Rodney Sharp Professor, School of Education and Psychology, The University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware
- 1976-1978 President, Jean Piaget Society
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- 1977 Elected Fellow of Division 7 of the American Psychological Association
- 1978 Acting Chair, Department of Educational Studies, The University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware
- 1979-1995 Dean, College of Education, The University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware
- 1981-1984 Associate Editor, *American Educational Research Journal*, monthly journal of the American Educational Research Association
- 1986-1998 Various executive roles, The Holmes Partnership, Inc. (formerly the Holmes Group)
- 1988-1991 Co-founder and co-director, Project 30
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- 1994 Sc.D, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (honorary degree)
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- 1997-1999 Program area director, The National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teacher Education (NPEAT)
- 1998-2011 President, Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), Washington, DC
- 2000-2006 Senior Investigator, Carnegie Study on Teacher Education, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Menlo Park, California (member of a team of six senior investigators)



- 2009 Named Member of the Laureate Chapter, Kappa Delta Phi, the international honor society in education. Membership in the laureate chapter is limited to 60 living scholars
- 2010-present Chair, Board of Directors, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), Washington, DC
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Teacher Education Program, Rockhurst University, Kansas City, Missouri, 2003

Teacher Education Program, Hollins University, Roanoke, Virginia, 2003

Master of Arts in Teaching Program/Master of Science for Teachers Program, Union Graduate College, Schenectady, New York, 2003

Teacher Education Program, Long Island University, Brooklyn, New York, 2003

Teacher Education Program, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado, 2003

Teacher Education Program, Colorado State College, Pueblo, Colorado, 2004

Elementary & Secondary Teacher Education Program, Texas Lutheran University, 2004

Teacher Education Program, Regis University, Denver, Colorado, 2004

Teacher Education Program, Centenary College, Hackettstown, New Jersey, 2005

Teacher Education Program, Bethel University, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 2005

Teacher Education Program, Manhattan College, Riverdale, New York, 2005

Teacher Education Program, Houghton College, Houghton, New York, 2005

Teacher Education Program, Dominican College, Orangeburg, New York, 2005

Graduate Programs in Education, Dominican College, Orangeburg, New York, 2005

Teacher Education Program, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 2005

Teacher Education Program, State University of New York at Albany, Albany, New York, 2006

Elementary & Secondary Teacher Education Program, Texas Lutheran University, 2006

Teacher Education Program, State University of New York-Buffalo, 2006

Teacher Education Program – Elementary, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 2006

Teacher Education Program – Secondary, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 2006

Teacher Education Program, Westminster College, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2006

Teacher Education Program, Alderson-Broadus College, Phillippi, West Virginia, 2006

Teacher Education Program, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, West Virginia, 2006

Teacher Education Program, College of Mount St. Vincent, Bronx, New York, 2006

Teacher Education Program, Lakeland College, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, 2007

Teacher Education Program, Dominican College, Orangeburg, New York, 2007

Graduate Programs in Education, Dominican College, Orangeburg, New York, 2007

Teacher Education Program, Saint Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa 2007

Teacher Education Program, Felician College, Lodi, New Jersey, 2007

Curriculum Supervision Program, Felician College, Lodi, New Jersey, 2007

Teacher Education Program, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, 2007

Teacher Education Program, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Mahwah, New Jersey, 2007

Teacher Education Program, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York, 2007

Teacher Education Program, Hartwick College, Oneonta, New York, 2007

Teacher Education Program, Long Island University, Southampton, Long Island, New York, 2007

Teacher Education Program, Long Island University, Westchester, Purchase, New York, 2007

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Health and Physical Education Program, Long Island University, C.W. Post, Brookville, New York, 2008

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Special Education and Literacy Program, Long Island University, C.W. Post, Brookville, New York, 2008

Teacher Education Program, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, 2009

Educational Leadership Program, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, 2009

Initial and Continuing Teacher Education Program, University of Southern Maine, Gorham, Maine, 2009

Teacher Education, Special Education, and Curriculum Program, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, 2009

Professional Development Master's Degree Program, Lesley University, Boston, Massachusetts, 2009

Teacher Education Program, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 2009

Teacher Education Program, Bloomfield College, Bloomfield, New Jersey, 2009

Teacher Licensure Program, Brevard College, Brevard, North Carolina, 2009

Initial Teacher Preparation Programs, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2009

Teacher Education Program, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2009

Teacher Education Program, Long Island University, Riverhead, Long Island, New York, 2009

Teacher Education Program, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2010

Administration and Supervision Program, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 2010

Teacher Education Program, State University of New York at Albany, Albany, New York, 2011

Teacher Education Program, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, 2011

Educator Education Programs, Chapman University, Orange, California, 2011

Master of Arts in Teaching Program, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, 2011

MSED and Professional Licensure Certificate Administration & Supervision Program, Shenandoah University, Winchester, Virginia, 2011

Educator Preparation Program, Shenandoah University, Winchester, Virginia, 2011

Teacher Education Program, Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas, 2011



