

September 2006

College of Education  
P.O. Box 5774, Flagstaff, AZ 86011  
<http://coe.nau.edu/aci/>

Office of Academic Assessment  
P.O. Box 4091, Flagstaff, AZ 86011  
<http://www.nau.edu/assessment>

# Northern Arizona University NCATE Update

## Upcoming Workshops

### Deciphering SPA Requirements

Friday, September 29  
8:30 am to noon  
COE Room 211  
RSVP by Thursday, September 21

### Building Rubrics that Align with Standards & Documenting Candidates' Effects on Student Learning

Friday, October 20  
8:30 am to noon  
COE Room 205  
RSVP by Thursday, October 12

### Using E-Portfolios - the What, Why, and How & Other Data Collection Options

Friday, November 3  
8:30 am to noon  
COE Room 211  
RSVP by Thursday, October 26

### Documenting Candidate Dispositions

Friday, December 1  
8:30 am to noon  
COE Room 211  
RSVP by Monday, November 27

#### NCATE Contacts

Kathy Hildebrand, Ph.D., Assistant Dean of Assessment & Continuous Improvement, College of Education  
[Kathy.Hildebrand@nau.edu](mailto:Kathy.Hildebrand@nau.edu), 523-7101

Cynthia Conn, Ph.D., Associate Director, Office of Academic Assessment; Instructor, College of Education  
[Cynthia.Conn@nau.edu](mailto:Cynthia.Conn@nau.edu), 523-7624

Paul Alley, Project Director, College of Education  
[Paul.Alley@nau.edu](mailto:Paul.Alley@nau.edu), 523-9434

## NCATE Workshops...Sign-up Now

Four NCATE Workshops specifically addressing issues related to the implementation of program assessment plans and report writing will be offered this fall. The schedule of workshops is posted on the left. Check-in with coffee and snacks will begin at 8:00, and the sessions will begin at 8:30. In order to help us provide the appropriate number of materials, please RSVP by the dates listed. If you are unable to RSVP and would like to attend, you will still be welcomed.

The series is planned to provide guidance and support for those working in initial or advanced teacher preparation programs, as well as those working in programs that prepare other professional school personnel. Topics will be beneficial for those already in the process of implementing their assessment systems as well as for those needing assistance in beginning the process. In addition to receiving individualized assistance, participants will become more informed about NCATE processes, timelines, and reporting responsibilities across the University.

The first workshop, scheduled for Friday, September 29, will focus on program level assessment

processes, deciphering Specialized Professional Association (SPA) Requirements, writing program-specific assessment reports, and additional program level assessment items that are required for unit level NCATE reporting. For those programs that do not have a SPA to provide direction, the use of general assessment plan formats will also be covered in detail. The information presented will be relevant to those in the beginning planning stages, and will also serve as a critical check point and refinement opportunity for those already well into the planning, implementation and/or report writing processes.

The second workshop, to be held on Friday, October 20, will address developing evaluation rubrics or scoring guides that align with SPA or discipline standards. As in the first session, the information presented will be valuable for both those in advanced and implementation stages as well as those in the beginning processes of developing rubrics for their specific programs. This workshop will also focus on developing assignments and instru-

ments for documenting candidates' effects on student learning, which is a critical reporting focus for all programs.

The third session will address the use of TaskStream as well as other methods for collecting program level assessment data.

The series of workshops will conclude with a session regarding program and unit level collection of disposition data.

Time for direct consultation regarding specific program and academic area efforts will be scheduled into each workshop.

At least one representative from each program involved in the NCATE accreditation process is encouraged to attend these workshops. Participants are encouraged to bring their assessment planning documents to each workshop. To RSVP, please e-mail Laura Theimer at [Laura.Theimer@nau.edu](mailto:Laura.Theimer@nau.edu).

## Use PAIR's Web Site to Access Official Enrollment Data

The Planning, Budget, and Institutional Research (PAIR) office maintains the official data for the university related to enrollment and graduation numbers as well as a host of other institutional statistics. This is the data that programs will need to use for NCATE Unit and Specialized Professional Association (SPA) Reports starting in Spring 2007. Data regarding the head count, graduation rates, etc. for your department's academic programs can be accessed through PAIR's web site:

<http://www4.nau.edu/pair/EnrollmentDegree/EnrollmentDegree.asp>

All department chairs and program faculty involved in the NCATE process are strongly encouraged to access and review reports for academic programs related to program enrollment and graduation rates to confirm the information is accurate. The data is pulled directly from PeopleSoft, so if the correct program code is not being used

data may be inaccurate. The url for PAIR's web site is:

<http://www4.nau.edu/pair/Institution.asp>

From this page, click on Enrollment and Degrees in the left side menu. From this page, please review the 21 Day Census Data Enrollment and the Academic Awards reports.

## Candidate Impact on Student Learning

Assessment data related to the impact our candidates are having on student learning is required for both the Unit level and Specialized Professional Association (SPA) reports. NCATE has outlined a series of activities that should be documented to demonstrate candidate's effect on student learning.

The overall assignment should require the candidate to take responsibility for a significant unit of instruction. Candidates should then be involved in the following activities, and their work should be documented for assessment purposes.

1. **JUDGES PRIOR LEARNING** - candidates undertake a systematic assessment to understand the prior P-12 student learning in the area he or she will teach;
2. **PLANS INSTRUCTION** - candidates plan an appropriate sequence of instruction to advance P-12 student learning, based on the prior assessment;
3. **TEACHES** - candidates teach P-12 students to acquire and use content knowledge in meaningful ways, engaging those who bring differing background knowledge and learning needs, and provide students opportunities to demonstrate the use of critical and creative thinking skills;
4. **ASSESSES** - candidates conduct a concluding objective test or alternative assessment(s);
5. **ANALYZES** - candidates analyze the

results of the concluding assessment(s), documenting the student learning that occurred at individual and group levels, including explanations of results from students who learned more or less than expected, and results from each subgroup of students; and

6. **REFLECTS** - candidates reflect on changes in teaching that could improve results.

In summary, the core components include candidates' **evaluations of students' prior knowledge and/or skills** and **appropriate assessments following their teaching**. These together provide critical information about student learning. Candidates' **analyses** both document and explain instructional affects on student learning. **Planning and teaching**, including use of appropriate assessments, are the professional activities that candidates use to advance learning, and the concluding **reflections** provide opportunities for candidates to examine the efficacy of their teaching in terms of student learning.

The final reflective piece completed by students can serve as a useful instrument for documenting candidate effect on student learning for both program and unit level purposes.

## Transition Points

A requirement of the Unit level report is to submit aggregate data regarding candidates at four transition points. The four proposed transition points are:

1. Admission to the Program
2. Admission to the Capstone Course
3. Completion of the Capstone Course
4. Completion of the Program

Initial Programs, Advanced Programs, and Other School Professional Personnel Programs must define the criteria necessary for candidates to complete each transition point as well as criteria necessary to advance to the next point.

The Unit will be collecting and reporting on a variety of different measures at each of the approved transition points. For most programs, many of the criteria are currently in place such as GPA standards, capstone course faculty recommendations, and criteria for successful completion of the capstone course. Even so, additional criteria are in the process of being established by faculty committees. These will result in programs adopting or developing new instruments or means of data collection or reporting. Completion of a survey regarding candidate dispositions is an example

of an adoption of criteria to be used in the first and fourth transition points,

Although assessments required by SPAs do not necessarily or explicitly state they should align with Unit determined transition points, programs are encouraged to identify an assessment or assessments that both meet SPA requirements and can be used as evidence for Transition Points, particularly for points two and three.

For those interested in staying apprised of this process, the following faculty groups are currently addressing the criteria for transition points:

- The Undergraduate Teacher Education Program Admissions Committee
- The Student Teaching Committee
- The University Secondary Teacher Education Committee (USTEC)
- The School Counseling Program

### Do you have program-level assessment data to analyze but little time and resources?

**The Office of Academic Assessment (OAA) can provide your unit with some useful analyses!**

**As a special service for academic units implementing assessment plans, OAA is available to assist with analyses of assessment data. Raw data collected from your rubrics, standardized tests, reflective essays, student surveys, etc. can be analyzed, and a statistical report in a format that fits your particular purpose will be provided. Our primary goal is to assist academic units with "completing the assessment loop," providing assessment findings that are useful for recognizing student-learning successes and to guide future curriculum improvements.**

**For more information, please contact Dr. Zhong Chen, Research Specialist at 523-8978 or Zhong.Chen@nau.edu.**

## Using TaskStream Rubrics for Program Assessment

TaskStream electronic portfolio software includes a comprehensive suite of standards-based instructional design tools. These can assist faculty design and assess curriculum to help demonstrate program candidates' progress towards meeting or exceeding various professional standards.

Specifically, TaskStream's "Rubric Wizard" can be a useful tool for developing performance-based assessment instruments used to directly measure candidates' progress towards specific outcomes. When candidates submit a signature assignment for evaluation for a particular course or program, that work is then evaluated using a standards-based evaluation rubric which can be entered into TaskStream.

When developing a rubric to measure candidates' performance on a signature assignment, keep the following information in mind:

- Rubric criteria are often provided by standards agencies in the form of performance indicators, which can be used verbatim in some instances.
- Each row, or criterion, of a rubric should be directly aligned to a specific performance indicator or standard.
- Programs have discretion over the number of performance levels used in a rubric. The only requirement is that rubrics contain a clear cutoff point between unacceptable and acceptable performance

on a particular rubric criterion.

- Rubrics can contain standards-based criteria, as well as other criteria which may be useful for the grading process. When we generate reports in TaskStream for program assessment purposes, it is possible to omit certain rubric criteria that have been included for separate grading purposes.
- Programs may choose to demonstrate their candidates' progress towards meeting or exceeding a particular outcome by grouping individual rubric criteria from multiple assignments (NCATE calls this a *composite assessment*).