Beyond checklists and evaluation reports: The benefits of accreditation as a tool for program improvement through stakeholder collaboration

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Beyond checklists and evaluation reports:
The benefits of accreditation as a tool for program improvement through stakeholder collaboration

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The University of Utah and Concordia University
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Accreditation at the University of Utah

- **Systematic use** of program evaluation and accreditation-related data for **systematic and lasting change** in teacher preparation.
- **Compliance** with national accreditation mandates illustrates how **accreditation-related practices inform program evaluation using feedback loops** for program quality.
- TEAC accreditation in 2011; first CAEP visit in spring 2016.
Stakeholders for Program Review

• Annual accreditation and program evaluation data are collected, aggregated, and analyzed by the Director of The Urban Institute for Teacher Education (UI TE) and the Teacher Education Program Research Analyst.

• Data are shared with and acted on by the Department of Special Education, UI TE faculty, the Faculty Advisory Committee on Teacher Education (FACTE), and related stakeholders.
Goals of Self-Study Aspect of Accreditation

• Examine strengths and inherent challenges of meeting the sometimes competing goals of accreditation requirements through meaningful examinations that may be part of self-reflection.
• Analyze program areas that are responsive to improvement measures.
• Facilitate dialogue about merits of self-study and the impact on program improvements from the process.
Impact of Self-Study on Several Program Areas

1. Identify explicit measures of student performance
2. Provide consistent and reliable supervisory support
3. Examine mathematics performance trends among elementary preservice teachers
4. Use mixed methods for evaluating student teachers’ performance
5. Ensure curriculum alignment
Explicit Performance Measures and the Teacher Licensure Framework

- **Multiple interval assessment** using the **Utah Effective Teaching Standards (UETS)** - during student teaching, portfolio evaluation, beyond.
  - A 49 item, Praxis-INTASC-informed instrument measures performance across broad-based themes related to content, management, professionalism, communication, pedagogy, and relationships with students.

- UETS for graduating students, alumni, and employers.

- Data provides comprehensive **understandings of student teacher performance and attitudes** as well as **data triangulation**.
Consistency in Supervisory Support

• Findings based upon data collected across multiple years (i.e., 2012-2014) on effective supervision. Results have informed the technical dimensions of evaluation tools as well as data analysis.

• Equally critical are subsequent conversations on what constitutes effective teaching.

• The data collection process has also prompted key areas for program quality reviews. By collecting and reviewing supervisory data at multiple junctures, program area reviews have examined:
  • teacher development over the course of a program
  • conversations on what constitutes effective teaching for beginning teachers
  • tough questions on how teacher educators view diversity.
  • curriculum decisions, faculty instructional strategies, and the importance of partnership schools that embody our institutional mission related to student diversity.
Examinations of Mathematics Performance Holistically

- Detailed statistical analysis conducted on the relationship between passing rates on the Mathematics Praxis II test for licensure and candidate performance measures (e.g., entering and exiting GPAs, math course performance, Praxis I Math Exam scores).

- Findings include:
  - relationships between GPA and repeated Praxis text taking (e.g., Teacher Candidates who took the Praxis II math exam more than once had on average, a lower admissions GPA than those Teacher Candidates who took the Praxis II math exam once (t-test statistically significant at the 90% confidence level);
  - and relationships between course taking performance and Praxis II math performance.
Data were shared with mathematics faculty, teacher education faculty, and those in program development roles within the College of Education.

Discussions among stakeholders allow for data informed decision making. Specific outcomes toward program improvement include:

- curriculum development
- remediation/support plans for student teachers
- explicit plans to more carefully determine admissions decisions in coordination with cross-campus partners in mathematics preparation.
P-12 Student Outcome Data: Impact on P-12 Student Learning and Development

- **Student Achievement Data** - Student achievement was disaggregated by school year/grade/subject, by district and charter school, and by Title I status.
- **Comparisons** of the percent proficient between graduates and statewide teachers’ performance indicated that program graduates exceed the statewide average in 6th grade Language Arts, Math, and Science for the 2011-2012 school year.
  - Small sample size
- **Performance patterns** in graduates’ students’ performance serve as prompts for programmatic changes scheduled for 2017 (e.g., linking pedagogy and math content courses via instructor collaboration). These discussions are part of a feedback loop where data inform conversations with faculty on programmatic issues and prospective changes over time.
Mixed Methods for Evaluating Student Teachers’ Performance Portfolios & Curriculum Analyses

• Each teacher candidate creates an e-portfolio to document proficiencies tied to content and pedagogical knowledge as well as program impact standards.

• **Assessing e-portfolio work artifacts** allows for in-depth investigations of teacher candidate competencies in assessment, diversity, lesson planning, classroom management, technology integration, reflection, and content knowledge.

• **Building precision in our scoring rubrics** and looking at teaching episodes in situ are strategies we will employ in the future.
• Across teacher licensure courses, an analysis was completed where faculty examined individual courses artifacts linked to the UETS.
• To further examinations of artifacts within coursework, all faculty delineated the assignments generated from their classes and their linkages to the UETS.
• Faculty members documented course goals and assignments designed to influence a teacher candidate in gaining proficiency with the skill indicated in the standards.
• Findings have provide profiles of curriculum where specific content emphases reside and where greater attention will be required in future.
Relevance & Implications for Action

- Multiple data sources inform program quality over time, and in ways that catalyze cross-disciplinary conversations, and action in teacher preparation.
- Exploring whether accreditation impacts overall program quality includes an approach that defines accreditation broadly, both conceptually and practically.
- Institutions must consider conscious efforts to reflect across colleges, universities, and communities that are part of the accreditation process.
- An overlooked benefit of accreditation stems from broad-based goals for quality and in-depth reflection on practice in partnership with stakeholders across the preparation continuum.
- An effective evaluation process includes a willingness by institutions to view accreditation as an opportunity for in-depth reviews that prompt reciprocity toward systems change.
Questions for Consideration

• How might institutions benefit from accreditation as more than “hoop jumping?”

• How might technology profile the process of accreditation as a tool for program improvement?

• How might institutions build “allyships” among stakeholders who contribute to productive conversations related to accreditation?