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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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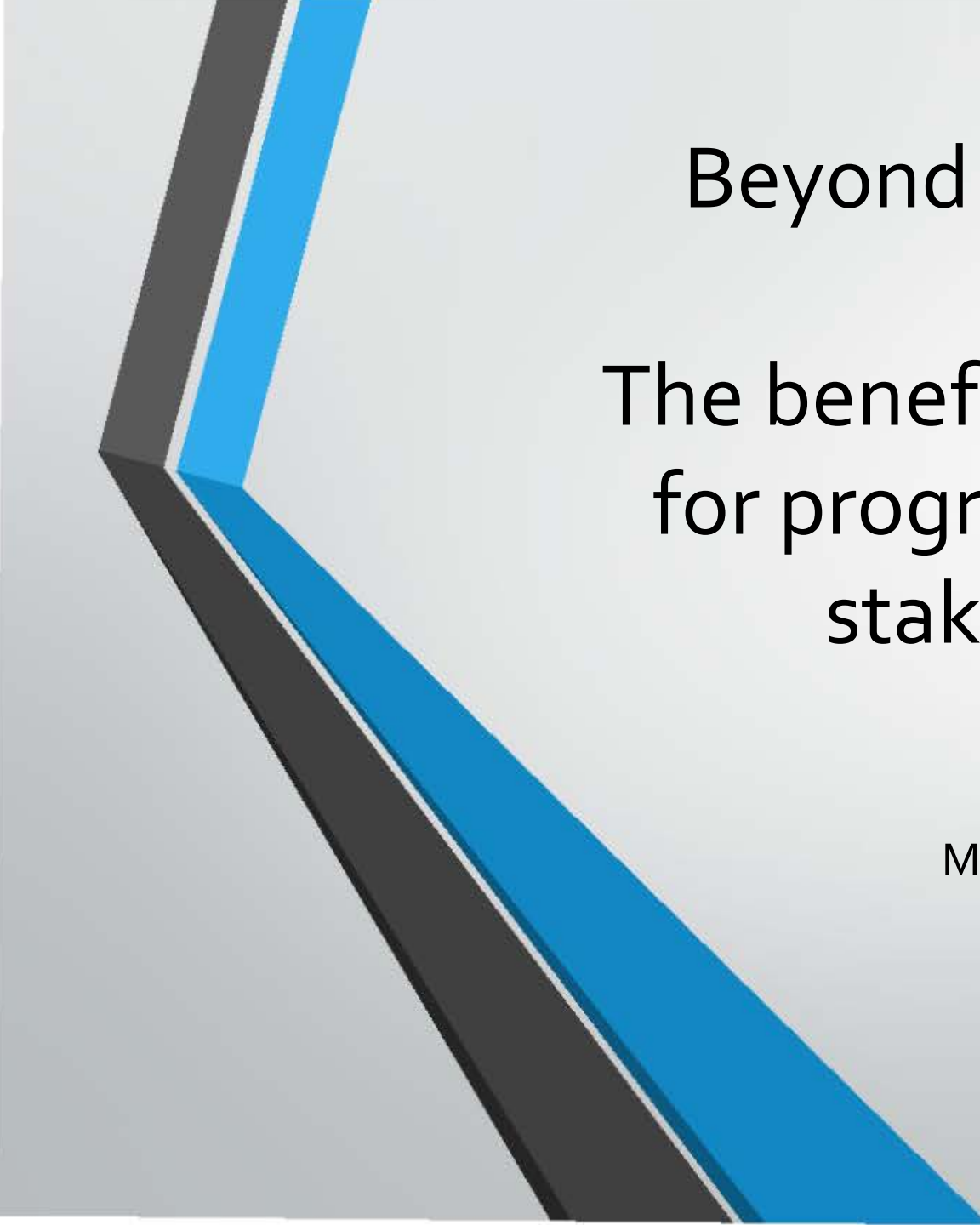


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Beyond checklists and evaluation
reports:
The benefits of accreditation as a tool
for program improvement through
stakeholder collaboration

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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 (UITE) and the Teacher Education Program Research Analyst.
- Data are **shared with and acted on** by the Department of Special Education, UITE 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 test 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.**

Math Performance Continued -

- **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.

Curriculum Alignment

- 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?