Rejoinder to NCATE Board of Examiners’ Report

January 30, 2004
Standard 4. Diversity

The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. These experiences include working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in PK-12 schools.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, page 46

Continued Area for Improvement

The student body reflects limited cultural diversity. The racial composition of the student body at the initial level is approximately 97% Black. The unit has not implemented an aggressive, planned approach to recruit other race students at the initial level.

Unit Response

Grambling State University continues to be committed to developing and implementing creative and innovative strategies to attract other race students to enroll in academic programs that represent the highest of quality. To this end, for the second year, President Neari F. Warner has led a major initiative to recruit other race students. In the fall of 2003, a personal letter signed by her allowed for the recruitment and offering of Ambassador Scholarships to 5,078 other race students.

Currently, we have received the names and addresses from ACT to offer Ambassador Scholarships to 3,819 other race students from four states. These students have ACT scores ranging from 19 to 25. The College of Education is listed as an option identifier. The scholarship is equivalent to $5,350 per year or $21,400 for four years, as long as the recipient maintains scholarship requirements. Additional letters, signed by President Warner, will be mailed to students in February 2004.

It is our hope that this campaign will increase the other race enrollment for fall 2004 and will prove to be a profitable endeavor. Students who return the scholarship form and list education as a major will have their names/addresses sent to the College of Education by the Office of Admission and Recruitment. Upon receipt, the Dean of the College will send prospective candidates a letter congratulating them for having chosen the field of education as their major and informing them of their next steps.
Faculty are qualified and model best professional practices in scholarship, service, and teaching, including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to candidate performance. They also collaborate with colleagues in the disciplines and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates professional development.

Board of Examiners Report, page 51  Modified Continuing Weakness

The unit does not have a systematic plan in place to quantify the areas of scholarship and service in faculty evaluations, nor is there evidence of how feed-back from evaluations is used to improve research and service. While evaluation mechanisms are currently in place which clearly compare teaching expectations with performance and describes what is expected as “best practice,” this is not true for research and service.

Unit Response

We are in the initial stages of developing a systematic plan to quantify the areas of scholarship and service in faculty evaluation. This will ensure that feed-back from faculty evaluations is used to improve research and service. To this end, the president has appointed a committee comprised of faculty, department heads, academic deans and faculty senate representatives to work in collaboration with an outside consultant to achieve this goal.
The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

Board of Examiners Report, page 58  Areas for Improvement

(NEW)
The teaching load assignments of faculty members are not consistent and in compliance with university policy. The university and the unit have policies in place to govern faculty load at the initial and advanced levels. Faculty load assignments do not comply with those policies. There is a pattern of faculty carrying overloads that exceed the university’s policy. In some cases, faculty overload assignments do not seem to be rewarded with compensation.

Unit Response

Grambling State University adheres to the workload policy as described in the Faculty Handbook, 2002:

Workloads assigned to faculty at Grambling State University include teaching, research or creative activities, professional activities, University service, and community service. The academic department heads with approval of the dean, are responsible for determining the workload of each faculty member.

Factors considered in assigning workloads to faculty members include, but are not limited to the following: (1) nature of the discipline, (2) nature of courses taught (undergraduate, graduate, or combination), (3) number of course preparations per semester, (4) number of contact hours per semester hour, (5) number of students taught per semester, (6) curricular requirements such as practicums and field experiences, (7) standards required by accrediting agencies, (8) research or creative activities, (9) administrative duties, (10) number of directed theses or dissertations, (11) student advisement load, (12) approved release time for research, (13) planned professional activities, and (14) special department, college, school, division, or university assignments.

Whereas the regular teaching load at the Grambling State University is 12 credit hours per semester, a faculty member’s particular load may vary depending upon assigned responsibilities in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Variation in responsibilities may relate to the mission of the faculty member’s academic unit. Academic personnel may be compensated for professional duties assigned or performed in addition to their regular assignment (overload/extra services) if funding is available.

Faculty members who are requested to assume duties that require intensive and/or long-term additional responsibilities such as writing detailed and/or specialized reports, or compiling portfolios for accrediting bodies may request release time from academic, regular, and/or other committee work. The faculty member may also request other compensatory measures for performing these tasks. All agreements for compensation shall be in writing and signed by all parties before work commences. Teaching classes beyond what is considered to be a “full load,” shall be regarded as additional teaching responsibility and eligible for monetary or other form of compensation.
Work Overload/Extra Services

For faculty members, an “overload” is defined as the documentable professional or technical services performed for the university in excessive or regular workload assignment.

The purpose of the “Extra Services Compensation Policy” is to compensate faculty (and other employees) for performing additional duties or assuming responsibility funded by external grants or special campus projects.

The University encourages its faculty (and other unclassified employees and administrative staff) to undertake research and other projects to enrich their scholarly competence and the programs offered to graduate or undergraduate students. These projects are further encouraged as a means of providing valuable public services. It is the general policy of the University that initial sponsored projects awarded to faculty as a principal investigator be undertaken on a release-time basis. The extra services contract is an option in those instances where it is not possible for an individual to be released from his/her regular University duties.

Extra services shall be defined as duties and responsibilities performed by faculty (and other unclassified employees) outside the stated job description. Extra services compensation shall be a maximum of thirty percent (30%) of the monthly salary over the period of the extra services contract for activities funded by external sources or University special projects. The maximum percentage of a faculty member’s monthly salary over the period of the extra services is twenty percent (20%) for conducting a single grant or special project; an additional ten percent (10%) may be realized for administering more than one grant or special project, but the maximum total percentage shall not, in any case, exceed thirty percent (30%) of the contracted salary.

Extra services contracts shall be approved and documented by the appropriate University officials. Extra services compensation shall not begin prior to the signature of all individuals listed on the extra services contract. The contracts shall be issued pending the availability of funds.

Extra Compensation for Work Overload and Extra Compensation Paid by Outside Agencies (Grants and Contracts)

In those instances where it is not possible for a faculty member to be released from regular University responsibilities in order to undertake sponsored projects funded by agencies outside the University (e.g., grant agencies, foundations, or corporations), compensation for overload employment shall be permitted up to twenty percent (20%) of annual, or annualized, gross salary for one grant, or, up to thirty percent (30%) for two or more grants. The allowable extra compensation limits shall be based on the fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

Overload employment on sponsored projects funded by outside agencies may be undertaken only when the additional responsibilities do not interfere with regular University responsibilities. The rate of pay for overload compensation for one grant or project may not exceed the equivalent of one-and-one-half times the regular hourly rate paid by the University, providing that the extra compensation does not exceed the limit of 20% of annual, or annualized, gross salary. Computation of the hourly rate shall be based on the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nine-month employees</th>
<th>1,440 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ten-month employees</td>
<td>1,600 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven-month employees</td>
<td>1,907 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve-month employees</td>
<td>2,080 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The policies of a sponsoring agency shall govern overload compensation if they are more restrictive than the University policies.

Extra Compensation Paid by the University for Teaching Overloads

Faculty members teaching credit courses on an overload basis, whether on or off campus, shall receive extra compensation. The overload must be recommended by the head of the faculty member’s academic unit.
(department, school, or division) and approved by the faculty member’s dean and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs prior to the start of the teaching assignment.

The compensation for teaching a three-hour credit course on an overload basis shall be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>$2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>$1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>$1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>$1400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The compensation shall be prorated accordingly for courses other than three credit hours.
STANDARD ONE: CANDIDATE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Pages 13-14:

Although the unit collects the data, aggregation has not been completed, nor is there evidence that it is disseminated in a coordinated manner. Most individual deficiencies are addressed anecdotally, not systematically; however, PASS-PORT is in preliminary stages of implementation and can be used as a tool to aggregate and disseminate data.

Unit Response

Data are collected and disseminated through PASS-PORT and assessed at each Portal level. Portal committees recommend candidate to advance to the next portal. These recommendations will be compiled at the end of each semester into an aggregated report. These reports will be distributed accordingly. Additionally, the Assessment Coordinator has established procedures for obtaining and collecting data systematically from individual candidates who took the examination(s) and did not pass. Candidates provide a copy of the PRAXIS Series Examination Score Report with detailed information for the test(s) taken such as test category, raw points earned, raw points available, and average performance range to the Assessment Coordinator. The Assessment Coordinator aggregates data to be used for program improvement. This information is being shared with the department head, the director of Office of Professional Laboratory Experiences and the Director of the Centralized Advisement Referral and Evaluation (CARE) Center. These individuals analyze the data and make recommendations as to areas that are in need of being strengthened. For specific content areas, the information is shared with the departments to assist them in analyzing and strengthening performance of their teacher candidates.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 21

Data gathered from candidates’ scores on PLT do not support unit’s statement that candidates demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the impact of content knowledge on student learning. Aggregated PRAXIS scores by program provided the following data.

Unit Response

The unit recognizes the importance of high passage rates for the PRAXIS Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT). However, candidates’ grades in education courses, ratings on field experience performance, and above average ratings by university supervisors and cooperating teachers using the evaluation form based on Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching all demonstrate the candidates’ ability to plan and implement lessons that reflect understanding of the impact of content knowledge on student learning. Student learning is demonstrated in video taped lessons and student work samples resulting from such lessons. Recognizing that the
passage rate on PLT needs to be improved, the PRAXIS laboratory is being monitored closely by faculty to identify problem areas and develop resources to improve candidates’ performance.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 21

When a lesson is observed by a cooperating or supervising teacher, feedback is provided. Areas of improvement are noted; however, there is no clear indication that adjustments are made.

Unit Response

Though there was no clear indication that adjustments are made when feedback is provided to the candidate by both the cooperating and supervising teacher, the process ensures that adjustments are made as soon as possible. The field experience is structured to provide a mentoring relationship between the cooperating teachers and student teachers. The mentoring includes a cycle of practice, feedback, and adjustments. The cooperating teacher observes on a daily basis adjustments that the student teachers make. Candidates who fail to make appropriate adjustments to feedback are referred to the Office of Professional Laboratory Experiences (OPLE) and appropriate actions are taken. Formal evaluations of student teachers reflect cooperating and supervising teachers’ assessments of candidates at various points during the experience. They also demonstrate chances in the candidates’ performance. These chances are a direct result of feedback from the cooperating and supervising teachers.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 21

Evidence found in various portfolios indicates that while each contained a rubric, reflection was not rated separately, and thus reflection was not always evident. Adjustment of lesson plan and activities appeared to be more the result of environment rather than reflection on events or adjusting to enhance learning. Course syllabi include instructions for assembling the portfolio but reflection was not described explicitly.

Unit Response

Reflection is rated throughout the semester by cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and the director of OPLE. Candidates bring their journals to scheduled seminars sessions where reflections are reviewed. Candidates’ journal entries are critiqued for their focus on issues, ideas, questions, and what they are learning as they engage in student teaching. Guidelines for writing reflections are presented and discussed in a session during the workshop week prior to reporting to student teaching assignments. Cooperating teachers and university supervisors review the journals as part of the observation process.
Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 30

In reviewing the tabulated results of the Fall 2001 LEC Student Questionnaire, it was clear that although the candidates rated the programs “average or strong” on most of the variables, many recommendations ranged from organizational issues, to course content requirements, to clarifying policies in handbooks.

Unit Response

Faculty and LEC Board members implement changes to improve the program based on the results of the student questionnaire. In addition, the curriculum is reviewed based on students’ evaluation. Standing committees of the board continue to review results to ensure appropriate programmatic changes.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 31

Among the results of the most recent Employer Survey was a finding that ninety-five percent of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the program. However, the tabulation of the responses did not provide information in a very significant item from the survey. Item #5 solicited input through the question, “What can the Teacher Education Department at GSU do to improve the program?” The Assessment Action Matrix and interviews with the assessment committee indicated that these types of responses would be standardized and formulated into a program report to the unit head and PK-16+ Council once the PASS-PORT system is fully implemented.

Unit Response

Responses will be compiled into a report in spring 2004 and provided to PK-16+ Council and unit head for program improvement.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 31

The review of the rubrics that have been developed for the multiple assessment activities for candidates in initial preparation programs indicates a lack of consistency or perhaps cohesion in the unit’s identified performance levels.

Unit Response

Rubrics have been standardized for consistency for each level of performance. The assessment committee is coordinating this effort.
Interviews with the faculty in the LEC program indicated that because of the three-institution configuration of the program, the PASS-PORT system, as presently configured, does not allow for tracking of candidates who have not identified the unit as their primary institution nor the inputting of data on candidates from faculty members taking courses at either of the other institutions. It was suggested that this concern would be addressed as the full implementation of the system comes on-line.

Unit Response

There will be better coordination among the Assessment Coordinators of the three institutions. Additionally, all LEC Faculty will be listed in PASS-PORT at all three institutions.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 33

The standardization of the instruments for inclusion into the PASS-PORT system is one of the most significant challenges to the assessment committee during this second year of implementation.

Unit Response

Portal committees have been formed to examine standardization of instruments in each portal. Recommendations will be made to Assessment Committee to ensure changes.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 33

Since the assessment system is only in its second year of implementation, most of the data that has been collected is still in a “summarization” rather than “application” stage.

Unit Response

Fall 2003 demonstrated a summarization mode. However, with the submission of reports, committees are in position to develop recommendations for program improvement for spring 2004.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 34

Two of the primary challenges the committee faces are to standardize the instruments used for gathering data, scheduled for the winter 2003-04, and then to review the validity and reliability of the data, scheduled for fall 2004.
Unit Response

Portal committees have met, instruments are being standardized and used for data collection. By spring 2004, the unit will be on target for standardization.

STANDARD FOUR: DIVERSITY

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 44

The “other race” recruiter, however, was not familiar with the unit’s diversity plan.

Unit Response

The university’s other race recruiter has worked with the unit by providing information about the elements of the university’s diversity plan in order for there to be unit alignment. In fact, as described in the Institutional Report, several unit faculty members have accompanied him, the other race recruiter, on recruiting trips. Moreover, discussions about how best to attract/recruit other race students occur during these trips, thereby allowing for continuous refinement of both the university and unit’s diversity plan.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 44

No other information was available to document the success of the unit’s diversity plan.

Unit Response

Documentation of the success of the unit’s diversity plan was not available at the time of the visit. However, as described in the Institutional Report, there is collaboration between the unit, area secondary schools and community colleges. Faculty and candidates have interaction with high school students during a variety of activities, including high school day and the Teacher Cadet Program. The unit recognizes, however, the need to ensure that documentation, per collaborative effort, be available in the future.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Pages 45 and 46

Although several activities have been undertaken, the unit has not implemented an aggressive, planned approach to recruit other race students at the initial level. The student body reflects limited cultural diversity at the initial level.
Unit Response

An aggressive planned approach to recruit other race students at the initial level is being refined. While, as indicated, several activities have been undertaken, the unit recognizes the need to do more than it has in the past. As a result, the unit will continue to work in tandem with the university’s other race recruiter to ensure that potential students to the university who identify ‘Education’ as their intended major are provided with a letter from the office of the dean, along with literature describing the unit offerings. In addition, funding for scholarships is being sought through grant proposals.

STANDARD FIVE: FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 49

According to current documentation, there is not a systematic plan in place to quantify minimum expectations in the areas of scholarship and service.

Unit Response

Since the faculty evaluation system utilized by the unit emanates from the university’s faculty evaluation system, refinement is currently being undertaken. The president has appointed a university committee, comprised of faculty, department heads, academic deans and faculty senate representatives, to work in collaboration with a consultant, to develop an evaluation instrument that will address the quantification of scholarship and service.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 50

While faculty appear to receive some feedback on their performance, it continues to be unclear as to how this feedback is used to improve teaching, research, and service. This is an ongoing concern, which was first cited in October 1996.

Unit Response

Faculty members do receive some feedback about their performance. Faculty members are provided verbal feedback by respective department heads and the dean. The unit recognizes the importance of developing and providing a plan of remediation to faculty members based on the recommendations of department heads and evaluations by the dean, specifically for the areas of research and service. Conferences following evaluation will be used to develop action plans for addressing areas of weakness.
On some matters, the Council of Deans functions in an advisory body, and then on other matters, as a policy-making body. While these two functions are built into this council, the documentation on the governance structure is not totally clear on what is policy and what is advisory. This dual functioning within the Council of Deans not only affects the College of Education, but all academic units at the University.

Unit Response

The Council of Academic Deans, comprised of all academic deans and other academic administrators where a dean is not the administrative head, serves in an advisory capacity to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Council recommends academic policies to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs who may subsequently discuss the recommendations with the President’s Cabinet. If positive discussions result, the recommendations are structured into a policy format that is ultimately approved and signed by the President of the University. The Council is then responsible for recommending procedures to be followed in implementing the approved policies.

The Council of Academic Deans is additionally responsible for the following tasks: (1) monitoring and maintaining the integrity of all academic programs; (2) assessing all aspects of the instructional programs; and (3) recommending and implementing programs and projects that enhance and strengthen academic offerings. (Source: Faculty Handbook – August 2001)

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 56

The unit faculty is engaged in scholarship and service; however, workload concerns exist ......... Interviews with the unit administrator, department heads, and faculty provided conflicting evidence of an established, documented and consistently applied policy on faculty overloads.

Unit Response

There is a consistent policy on faculty overloads as found on pages 90-91 in the Grambling State University Faculty Handbook, August 2002. As indicated, for faculty members, an "overload" is defined as documentable professional or technical services performed for the University in excess of regular workload assignment.

The purpose of the "Extra Services Compensation Policy" is to compensate faculty (and other employees) for performing additional duties or assuming responsibilities funded by external grants or special campus projects.
The University encourages its faculty (and other unclassified employees and administrative staff) to undertake research and other projects to enrich their scholarly competence and the programs offered to graduate or undergraduate students. These projects are further encouraged as a means of providing valuable public services. It is the general policy of the University that sponsored projects be undertaken on a release-time basis. The extra services contract is an option in those instances where it is not possible for an individual to be released from his/her regular University duties.

Extra services shall be defined as duties and responsibilities performed by faculty (and other unclassified employees) outside the stated job description. Extra services compensation shall be a maximum of thirty percent (30%) of the monthly salary over the period of the extra services contract for activities funded from external sources or University special projects. The maximum percentage of a faculty member’s monthly salary over the period of the extra services is twenty percent (20%) for conducting a single grant or special project; an additional ten percent (10%) may be realized for administering more than one grant or special project, but the maximum total percentage shall not, in any case, exceed thirty percent (30%) of the monthly salary over the period of the extra services.

Extra services contracts shall be approved and documented by the appropriate University officials. Extra services compensation shall not begin prior to the signature of all individuals listed on the extra services contract. The contracts shall be issued pending the availability of funds.

Board of Examiners, (BOE) Report, Page 58

The teaching load assignments of faculty members are not consistent and in compliance with University policy.

Unit Response

Teaching load assignments of faculty members include several factors as found on pages 88-89 in the Grambling State University Faculty Handbook, August 2002.

Factors to be considered in determining workloads of faculty members include, but are not necessarily limited to the following: (1) nature of the discipline, (2) nature of courses taught (undergraduate, graduate, or combination), (3) number of course preparations per semester, (4) number of contact hours per semester hour, (5) number of students taught per semester, (6) curricular requirements such as practicums and field experiences, (7) standards promulgated by accrediting agencies, (8) research or creative activities, (9) administrative duties, (10) number of directed theses or dissertations, (11) student advising load, (12) contracted release time for research, (13) professional activities, and (14) special department, college, school, division, or university assignments.

Whereas the regular teaching load at the University is 12 credit hours per semester, a faculty member's particular load may vary depending upon assigned responsibilities in the areas of
teaching, research, and service. Variation in responsibilities shall be related to the mission of the faculty member’s academic unit (e.g., department, school, college, division, or library). Academic personnel may be compensated for professional duties assigned or performed in addition to their regular assignment (overload/extra services) if funding is available.