A REJOINDER TO
THE NCATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS’ REPORT
OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE STATE UNIVERSITY
APRIL 26-30, 2003

Oklahoma Panhandle State University
Goodwell, Oklahoma  73939
July 21, 2003
NCATE/OCTP

To Whom It May Concern:

Oklahoma Panhandle State University was pleased to host the members of the NCATE Board of Examiners and the members of the Oklahoma Board of Examiners including representatives from the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation, the Oklahoma State Vocational System, and the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education for the initial NCATE accreditation and the Oklahoma continuing accreditation visit April 26-30, 2003.

The members of the joint NCATE/State team were congenial, professional, and thorough in completing the task of reviewing the Oklahoma Panhandle State University teacher education program. From the initial pre-meeting through the exit interview, the BOE members exhibited positive, supporting, and encouraging dispositions.

This rejoinder is divided into three sections. Section one will present some clarifying information to the original Institutional Report as reflected in the BOE report. Section two will address the single area of concern presented by the BOE team. Section three will present the future plans of the OPSU Teacher Education Program.

Yours for Excellence in Education,

R. Wayne Stewart, Ed.D.
Dean of Education,
Athletic Director,
OPSU
Section One

The BOE, on page 82, states the following:

The number of full time and part time faculty associated with the unit is eleven, six full time, the Dean, and four part-time (full-time in the University). Numbers vary throughout the report from this correction or more appropriately, this explanation. See pages 8, 60, and 74 of the IR for differing numbers.

The correct number of persons within the Teacher Education Council is 21, counting the Dean:

**OPSU Teacher Education Council**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Education</td>
<td>Dr. R. Wayne Stewart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Dr. Jay Lark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Mr. David Miller</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Dr. Joyce Bender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Ms. Shawna Lyle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Dr. Steve Hofer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Dr. Justin Collins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Dr. Bill Housel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Dr. Jerry Butler</td>
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<td>Dr. Cynthia Warren</td>
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<td>Dr. Russell Thatcher</td>
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<td>Dr. James Brooks</td>
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<td>Dr. Loyet Shafer</td>
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<td>Ms. Carolyn McCargish</td>
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<td>HPER</td>
<td>Mr. Steve Kissel</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
<td>Dr. Dale Goldsmith</td>
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<td>Public School</td>
<td>Ms. Rilla Collins</td>
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<td>Ms. Joyce Shrock</td>
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<td>Mr. Mike Parkhurst</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOEA President</td>
<td>Ms. Kristen Nussman</td>
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<td>Field Placement Dir.</td>
<td>Ms. Samme Ormiston</td>
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The correct number of full time and part time faculty is 15, with Drs. Stewart, Butler, Brooks, Warren, Shafer, Thatcher, and Ms. McCargish full time within the unit, and Drs. Lark, Bender, Hofer, Collins, Housel, Mr. Miller, Mr. Kissel, and Ms. Lyle part time within the unit and full time within the university (in their respective areas of Arts and Sciences). There are no adjunct teachers within the unit (two were mistakenly identified—Minard and Ormiston, who are adjunct teachers within the university, but not the unit).

There seems to be some conflicting information about the requirement of Oklahoma certification exams and their relationship to our program. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify information concerning certification requirements in Oklahoma.

Oklahoma requires three certification examinations before a teacher candidate can receive “standard” certification: the Oklahoma General Education Test (OGET), the Oklahoma Subject
Area Test (OSAT), and the Oklahoma Professional Teaching Examination (OPTE). OPSU requires two of these three within our program—the OGET and the respective OSAT. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education require the Praxis One (Pre-Professional Skills Test—PPST) for admission to a teacher education program within the state. Recently, they have announced that the OGET test may be substituted for the PPST. OPSU gives the student the option of taking either the PPST or OGET for admission purposes if the candidate does not meet either of the other requirements (Liberal Arts GPA or holding of a degree), and is considering making the OGET a requirement of admission to the program. The OGET is required later in our program (before the internship) as is the appropriate OSAT (before the internship). The OPTE is not required for completion of our program (graduation), but is required for certification in the state of Oklahoma. We recommend that the teacher candidate take the OPTE either during their internship semester or immediately following it.

On page five of the BOE, the following statement is made:

Approximately 55 to 60% of OPSU’s graduates become teachers in Kansas, Texas, Colorado or New Mexico. In addition, this area has undergone a rapid growth period (200% between 1990 and 2000 Census) that has significantly impacted the community and the student body demographics at OPSU. The university has responded by developing a Teaching English to Students of Other Languages (TESOL) minor degree program.

This is not our only response. Additional responses include the modification of each class within the OPSU Teacher Education Program to address diversity; the addition of the Diversity in Education course; the requirement of diversified placements in the pre-service section of the teacher candidate’s training; and the inclusion of required diversity activities in all of the “methods” classes.

On page 10 of the BOE, the following statement appears:

While the institution is challenged by its rural location in recruiting a diverse faculty, its full and part-time faculty and its use of cooperating teachers in various internships represent males and females and both Caucasians and Hispanics.

Please note that OPSU also utilizes all races and ethnicities as they are available. We do not limit use to only Caucasian and Hispanic.

On page 22 of the BOE, the following statement appears:

At the completion of the internship experience, the cooperating teacher will complete an assessment form that rates candidates’ demonstration of the twenty-two expanded dispositions from “rarely demonstrated” to “frequently demonstrated.” The information obtained is utilized during the final portfolio interview process. (emphasis added)

Please note that the information obtained is not only used to assess the teacher candidate during their final portfolio review, but is also used to evaluate and improve instruction within the program, to make changes to the program and/or classes, and to evaluate the unit including any changes and/or modifications deemed necessary.

On page 23 of the BOE, the following statement appears:

The unit requires candidates to use the same lesson plan design throughout the program.

The unit uses two lesson plan formats. One is utilized during enrollment in methods courses, and a similar, abbreviated version is used during the student internship. Both contain identical
requirements (objectives, reference to state competencies, modifications for special needs students, reflection, etc.), but the one used during the internship does not require the details (opening statements, list of examples, etc.) that the plan used in the methods courses.

On page 26 of the BOE, the following statement appears:
As of fall 2003, the institution will move completely away from the PPST to the OGET.
This is incorrect. Please refer to the last paragraph on page three of this rejoinder for an explanation of the OPSU requirements.

On page 27 of the BOE, the following statement appears:
Finally, before licensure, candidates must complete all graduation requirements and pass the OPTE.
This is incorrect. A teacher candidate may graduate from OPSU without taking the OPTE exam. Many of our candidates do this, as they are seeking certification in one of the surrounding states in which the OPTE is not required. The teacher candidate may not receive licensure in the state of Oklahoma without taking the OPTE, but this test may be taken after completion of the program (graduation).

In the BOE report of Section Four—Diversity, please note that the university is also striving to recruit minority faculty members by using alternative advertisement means and by producing quality minority graduates who may someday return as faculty members to OPSU, and, as stated in the BOE report on page 37, “Increasing the number of diverse clinical faculty for placement of candidates in field and internship experiences will continue as a priority.”

Area Five—Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development contains the single area of concern presented by the BOE. Further explanations and additional plans regarding this area of concern will be presented in the next section of this rejoinder.

Area Six—Unit Governance and Resources is one of the strong portions of the OPSU Teacher Education Program. The support of the administration, the allocation of funds for the unit, the continual upgrading of technology, and the current resources of the library all add to the success of the program.

State Area One—Portfolios:
On page 72, the following statement appears:
* OPSU requires that prospective teacher candidates begin their portfolio during EDUC 2112, Foundations of Education, which is the first class all candidates take.

The portfolio process actually begins in the class EDUC 2212 Principles of Teaching, one of the three classes taken by all “pre-admitted” teacher candidates. All three courses (EDUC 2112 Foundations of Education, EDUC 2122 Schools and Society, and EDUC 2212 Principles of Teaching) are required during the teacher candidate’s sophomore year.

State Area Seven—Admissions:
On page 78, the following statement appears:
This field experience occurs while they are enrolled in the first Education class that all candidates take (Educ 2112).

Again, in actuality, the first field experience that the candidate is required to complete also takes place in EDUC 2212 Principles of Teaching, not EDUC 2112 Foundations of Education. As stated earlier, all three of the “pre-admission” classes are required in the candidate’s sophomore year.

On page 79, the following statement appears:
Starting with the fall 2003 semester, all students seeking admission to OPSU’s teacher education program, will be required to pass the OGET in order to establish academic proficiency.

Again, please refer to page three of this rejoinder for an explanation of this statement. OPSU is considering making the OGET a requirement, but it has not taken effect at this time.

**Section Two**

**Standard Five—Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development** contains the single area of concern presented by the BOE:

The following statement appears on page 45 of the BOE report:
*There is insufficient evidence of scholarly activity related to the mission of the institution.*

**Rationale:**

Scholarly activity is defined variously in relation to the particular mission of the unit and university. While OPSU is primarily a teaching institution, its mission addresses “provide[ing] higher education . . . through academic programs, cultural enrichment, lifelong learning experiences, and public service activities." This mission suggests that faculty would engage in scholarly activities including attending national conferences; publishing teaching related materials in local and regional publications; presenting at teaching related conferences, etc. Attendance at national conferences to present scholarly work and membership in national organizations is not evident across all full-time faculty. No publications to demonstrate scholarly work in fields of specialization were reported by full-time faculty. While faculty participate in area professional activities, offer courses for continuing education, and pursue higher education course work leading to advanced degrees, written accounts of these activities are limited and inconsistent.

An initial response to the rational of the BOE and their conclusion that this is an area of concern is that they have misinterpreted the mission statement of the university. The mission statement reads:

*The mission of OPSU is to provide higher education primarily for people of the Oklahoma Panhandle and surrounding areas through academic programs, cultural enrichment, lifelong learning experiences, and public service activities. The educational experiences are designed to enrich the personal lives of students and to prepare them for roles in agriculture, business, education, government, and industry.*
This mission statement is directed toward the programs, enrichment, learning experiences, and activities that are provided to the student (people of the Oklahoma Panhandle and surrounding areas) and is not directed to the faculty of OPSU. The BOE saw and reported in their report several pieces of evidence that the students of OPSU are experiencing these activities and that the OPSU Teacher Education Program has based our goals and objectives on this mission statement. Even so, there was a wealth of evidence showing participation of most of the unit faculty attending state, local, and even some national conferences. There was evidence of presentation by some members of the unit at state and local professional development meetings, and there was evidence of publications by some members of the unit.

This does not mean that the unit at OPSU does not need to continue to participate in these meetings and even to increase participation at the state and national level, but neither does it mean that we are not performing scholarly activities. While our size and location present some advantages in the areas of individualized instruction and attention to teacher candidates, it can also cause some challenges in the area of professional development and scholarly activities. For this reason, the OPSU unit has striven to bring professional development activities to our campus and therefore use our limited resources to benefit the entire unit. The unit has developed a three-phase professional development plan for all unit faculty members. Based on the findings of the assessment sub-committee and their recommendation of three areas that need to be addressed, funding has been made available to:

1. Provide on-campus professional development activities that will address the identified areas of concern so that everyone in the unit will benefit.
2. Provide resources in the area of travel funds and conference fees to those individuals seeking to attend a state or national meeting that addresses the identified areas.
3. Provide resources in the area of travel funds and conference fees to individuals seeking to attend a state or national meeting in an area of particular interest.

All three of these phases have been met during this past year. Activities have been provided on-campus in the areas of diversity, technology, and assessment—the three areas identified by the unit assessment sub-committee; many of the unit have attended state and/or national meetings (most attended the annual Oklahoma Association of Colleges of Teacher Education [OACTE] and two were sent to a convention in Tennessee dealing with dispositions); and several have attended other state/regional meetings dealing with reading, special needs, assessment, and other areas. Evidence of all of these activities were viewed by the BOE.

The OPSU unit does have plans for the upcoming year to include individual scholarly activities as a portion of the requirement for membership in the unit. Each full time unit faculty member will identify a research project to be conducted throughout the year. Examples include a survey of the surrounding public schools to determine the technology needs of our teacher candidates, a survey of test scores (OGET) to chart the difference, if any, of the scores between Caucasian candidates and Hispanic candidates and to determine if there is a relation between language barriers and test scores, and studies in the area of dispositions of teacher candidates as demonstrated through writing assignments. Also, several members of the unit are already planning to present sessions at the OACTE annual convention this November, and there are plans underway to send some members to national meetings.

**Section Three**

The OPSU Teacher Education Program is not content to rest, having recently gone through the rigors of an accreditation process. Plans are already being discussed to expand our programs.
There is a distinct need in our service area for special education teachers, early childhood teacher and foreign language teachers; three areas of teacher certification that OPSU does not currently offer. We are exploring a three to five year action plan to have all three of these programs fully integrated into our unit.

The unit, through its continual assessment, anticipates modifications of our courses, programs, and unit based upon data received from candidates, public school teachers and administrators, the general public, test scores, and surveys taken throughout a candidate’s program of study. We anticipate the modifications will result in an increase of candidates’ certification exam scores along with an increase in the satisfaction level of professional preparation by both candidates and public school administrators.

In conclusion, the unit at Oklahoma Panhandle State University takes the responsibility of NCATE/State accreditation very seriously and knows the importance and the benefits to both the candidates and to the unit of this accreditation. We have made the statement before and will continue to make the statement that OPSU has one of the best teacher preparation programs in the state and that we will proudly compare our graduates to any other university in the state or nation.