Research Series No. 92

NCATE: DOES IT MATTER?
(Executive Summary)

Christopher W. Wheeler

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document reports a study of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). It examines how NCATE applies its Standards and the effect of its procedures on the quality of programs in professional education. The study represents one of twelve proposed by the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT) in response to a 1977 NCATE request for a comprehensive study of the accreditation process in education, including an examination of NCATE's own procedures and those of other accrediting organizations (i.e., regional agencies and State Departments of Education). NCATE requested that the comprehensive study also suggest new directions for improving the quality of professional education programs. This first study, which focused on NCATE, was funded jointly by the IRT and the Ford Foundation.

The Context

From 1974 to the present, numerous changes have occurred in NCATE that suggest the organization has begun to enforce its Standards more vigorously: its leaders have sought to create a new public image, its procedures have been altered, and its decisions to deny accreditation have increased.*

*NCATE was formed in 1952 and began to accredit programs in 1954. NCATE's history to 1964 was described by John Mayor in his study, Accreditation in Teacher Education--Its Influence on Higher Education (Washington, D.C.: The National Commission on Accrediting, 1965). NCATE's history to the present will be covered in a dissertation study currently being conducted by NCATE's Associate Director.
In 1979, before the 32nd Annual Texas Conference on Teacher Education, NCATE's Director stated the organization's commitment to enforcement in the following way:

"[C]learly, the most dramatic change has come with NCATE's recognition as a standard-bearer in consumer protection. The National Council has officially pledged to defend the rights, responsibilities, and interests of the general public, of students, and of all parties having an interest in programs for the preparation of personnel for our nation's schools."

In seeking to protect the public interest, the National Council has assumed and been assigned by both the Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation and the U.S. Office of Education the role of adjudging the quality of programs that prepare American teachers and school support personnel. NCATE accreditation now certifies to the public that programs have been evaluated and found to meet minimum standards of quality and are appropriate for the preparation of professionals and deserving of public trust and support.

Being a national, nongovernmental accrediting agency, NCATE has been successful in making accreditation decisions stick. Our belief is that we can give assistance to states in "taking the heat" for decisive action in curtailing ineffective and inefficient preparation programs... NCATE has demonstrated that it can stand the pressure of withdrawing accreditation of programs that cannot be professionally defended.

During the period 1974-78, NCATE's procedures for accreditation underwent significant change. Provisional (i.e., conditional) accreditation was discontinued; programs now are either granted or denied accreditation. Institutional reports now must follow a common format, and institutions must address every Standard. Visiting Teams now report findings Standard-by-Standard, make judgments on strengths and weaknesses, and reach consensus on whether requirements are met. Successful completion of an NCATE training session is required by NCATE staff and constituent groups.
for participation on a Visiting Team. Council proceedings (except accreditation actions, including Audit Committee deliberations, and personnel matters) are now open to the public, and, while NCATE policy limits information on Council decisions, some newspapers recently have carried stories on NCATE actions with respect to specific schools. Finally, the number of decisions to deny accreditation has increased in the past few years. As Table 1 shows, over the period 1974-78, NCATE denied accreditation to nearly one in five institutions presenting one or more programs for accreditation, in contrast to a 1954-73 rate of one in ten. (In 1979, the denial rate was 20 percent.)

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<td><strong>NCATE Accreditation Decisions, 1954-73 and 1974-78</strong></td>
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<td>1954-73 Institutions Presenting One or More Programs</td>
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<td>1974-78 Institutions Presenting One or More Programs</td>
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SOURCE: Tabulations from NCATE's school accreditation record books.

While an analysis of the reasons behind these changes lies outside the scope of this report, the existence of changes provides ample justification for a study of their effects. NCATE appears to have the potential for affecting significantly the quality of professional personnel who enter our school systems.
Findings of the Study

This study found that this potential is realized, in part, for there are numerous strengths in the NCATE accreditation process:

1. Present practice generally uncovers major problems in a program of professional education.

2. NCATE regulates some of the worst programs of professional education. Programs denied accreditation suffer from numerous serious problems that run the gamut of NCATE's Standards. NCATE denial represents a clear signal to the public that a program is inferior (as judged by NCATE Standards).*

3. The NCATE accreditation process is carried out in a professional manner in that participants take their responsibilities seriously and seek to apply the Standards in an objective way.

4. Institutions observed for this study whose programs were accredited by the Council generally benefited from the process in that they attempted to modify some parts of their programs in response to NCATE concerns.

5. Denial of accreditation has led to some modifications in programs, according to a random sample of institutions with one or more programs denied accreditation between 1974 and 1978.

In addition to working to protect the public from poor quality programs through the accreditation process, NCATE recently has taken a leadership role in criticizing and exposing the practices of bogus

*Other institutions with inferior programs may never submit them for NCATE accreditation. At the present time, over 1,100 institutions offer programs of professional education; NCATE accredits programs at only 537 institutions. However, it is estimated that between 70 and 80 percent of the new graduates in teacher education each year come from NCATE-approved programs.

Fear of denial is only one probable reason some institutions do not seek NCATE accreditation. Other institutions define their mission in areas NCATE does not emphasize (e.g., research). For that reason, they may see little value in NCATE accreditation. Others may feel NCATE evaluation is too expensive. Finally (but without exhausting the possibilities), others may feel that since state agencies have the legal responsibility for certifying graduates, they need be responsive only to Standards set by those agencies.
institutions. Under its present Director, NCATE has responded to a
growing number of complaints from those victimized by so-called
"universities" offering mail-order diplomas and spurious degrees.
Staff have testified before Federal agencies, written articles for
national journals, provided background information to news organizations
investigating abuses, and given speeches on the subject. NCATE
headquarters is now viewed by many as a center for information on such
practices.

One result of NCATE's efforts has been an increase in prestige.
In May 1980, NCATE announced three additional openings for Associate
Member positions on the Council. Response was immediate; by September,
eight organizations had submitted or were preparing applications. In-
stitutions are seeking NCATE accreditation in greater numbers. Each
academic year NCATE evaluates programs at sixty to seventy institutions.
For the academic year 1980-81, fifteen additional schools have applied
for initial accreditation. More than ever before, institutions planning
to undergo NCATE evaluation are attending workshops on accreditation
procedures. Institutions within states (Ohio) and within conferences
(the "Big 10") have even held meetings to discuss the implications of
the changing NCATE for their own programs. Finally, the U.S. Office
of Education, in unconditionally granting renewal to NCATE as a nation-
ally recognized accrediting agency for a period of four years, praised
the organization and found that NCATE served clearly identified needs.

But, as this report makes clear, there are some critical weak-
nesses in the NCATE accreditation process. This study found that NCATE
Visiting Team and Council members generally look to see whether a task or function is being performed at all, not, as the NCATE Standards require, whether it is being performed well. This "presence-or-absence" approach to applying the Standards is pursued for several reasons:

1. Vagueness in NCATE's Standards and their general organization impede attempts to judge program quality.

2. Explanatory materials developed by NCATE neither define key terms nor suggest what evidence is sufficient to demonstrate that Standards have been met.

3. Training sessions for prospective team members and team chairpersons provide only a cursory discussion of the Standards.

4. Work conditions constrain the ability of NCATE participants to evaluate program compliance. Among those conditions are a lack of time and people and a large number of programs to be evaluated.

5. Inappropriate institutional influence over composition of evaluation teams, information available to Visiting Teams and the Council, and future participation of team members affects the ability of the Council to evaluate fully program compliance with NCATE Standards.

6. Certain dynamics in team visits and Council meetings virtually preclude a thorough and complete examination of programs. Among those dynamics are participation by team members who lack training, in violation of NCATE's operating policy; participation by state agency observers as regular team members, in violation of NCATE's official policy; limited team member use of NCATE manuals in gathering data; emphasis on a presence-or-absence approach by most team chairpersons; and confusion over specific procedures to be followed during the team visits by team chairpersons. Council consideration of program performance is constrained by role definitions that discourage attempts to go beyond information presented in Visiting Team Reports and by a lack of time.

The study found instances of "in-depth" examination of programs, but they were overshadowed by the prevalence of the presence-or-absence
approach. When the in-depth approach was taken, NCATE Visiting Teams and Council members applied nearly all the requirements in a Standard, gathered evidence and made judgments across Standards, and made decisions on the basis of the overall effects weaknesses had on programs. Such teams and Council members generally looked to see how well a task or function was being performed.

The use of the in-depth approach was found to be linked directly to the level of expectations set by the team chairperson or Council member. The tone established initially created an environment in which many of the constraints generally leading to a superficial review of program compliance were minimized. As a result, when the in-depth approach prevailed, negative evidence available to team and Council members was uncovered and used; when the presence-or-absence approach prevailed, it often was not.

The study found that the prevailing approach to accreditation had serious consequences for the NCATE accreditation process: many requirements in the Standards were not evaluated, some were interpreted in favor of the institution, and generally, the Standards were applied inconsistently. The presence-or-absence approach, while identifying many obvious weaknesses and usually leading to denial of accreditation for programs clearly inferior by NCATE Standards, also resulted in accreditation of programs as deficient as those denied. The study thus raises the question of whether NCATE's stamp of accreditation is a meaningful indicator of quality.

Finally, the study showed that NCATE's effect on program quality is very limited. NCATE's power base, professional authority, proved
weaker than the economic or legal authority exercised by other "levers of power" that affect programs of professional preparation (e.g., legislative action, competition from neighboring institutions, regulatory powers of State Departments of Education, and support from alumni, among other "levers").

It was found that if accreditation seemed likely, institutions responded to the Visiting Teams' findings by selecting weaknesses to be addressed according to what they considered important, not necessarily what NCATE considered the most serious weaknesses. If denial appeared to be a real possibility, institutions addressed more weaknesses of a more serious nature. When the Council did accredit programs, changes beyond those already in the works were not made; in fact, when accreditation seemed in danger but was granted, efforts to change came to a halt—and sometimes even lost ground. When accreditation was denied, institutions gave a second look at weaknesses identified by NCATE; they responded either by making numerous changes or by doing nothing at all. When change occurred, it generally involved outside "levers of power," as administrators sought to minimize any negative effects on student enrollment. In such cases, NCATE's role was more indirect than direct, often serving to trigger the involvement of other levers.

These weaknesses were related to three major constraints that shape the organization's activity. The first is power. NCATE's power rests, ultimately, on professional authority. Unlike an organization with legal authority, NCATE can only recommend and suggest, not require, that change be made. While such a power base is important, reliance on
professional authority alone, this study found, resulted in limited institutional change.

The second constraint involves money. NCATE's financial base depends heavily on revenue from the institutions it accredits. Approximately one-half its annual funds comes from institutions; the other half is contributed by constituent organizations that make up the Council. NCATE's Director repeatedly has pointed out the possible tension between efforts to regulate the marketplace (which imply higher denial rates) and continued institutional support for NCATE's activities.

The third constraint relates to NCATE operations. NCATE relies heavily on volunteer help. Visiting Team, Audit Committee, and Council members all contribute their time as part of their professional responsibility for improving programs for professional educators. There are limits to the demands NCATE can place on those who volunteer their time to carry out its functions.

These constraints should be kept in mind as the findings of this study are reviewed. They are important when considering possible reforms.

But constraints need not breed pessimism. NCATE has made numerous changes in recent years in an effort to monitor more effectively programs for professional educators. Moreover, its constituent members include a wide spectrum of organizations involved in the training of teachers and learning support personnel: public school teachers, teacher educators, students, school psychologists, administrators, counselors, chief state school officers, special educators, institutional officers,
public representatives and school board members. In contrast with most nongovernmental agencies that attempt to police their own ranks, NCATE's base is broader than simply the institutions it seeks to regulate. To some degree, the study concluded, NCATE can be the master of its own destiny.

After considering both constraints and opportunities, this report describes three possible directions for NCATE: (1) maintenance of the status quo; (2) improvements in the presence-or-absence approach; and (3) incremental change toward a more vigorous application of the Standards (the in-depth approach). The first two alternatives are rejected; the third is recommended.

If the third alternative were followed, NCATE's accreditation procedures would be revised and efforts would be made to improve NCATE's access to external levers of power. This report argues that these actions must be undertaken together if NCATE's ability to pursue its stated goal of protecting the consumer from inferior programs of professional education is to be improved. Suggested changes in accreditation procedures include: (1) changes in the format of the Standards; (2) development of a policy manual that provides a rationale for each Standard, shows how Standards are related to one another, and provides examples of appropriate and inappropriate practices drawn from Visiting Team Reports and Council decisions; (3) development of a second, more demanding, set of Standards to provide an incentive for additional institutions that feel they have truly outstanding programs to seek NCATE accreditation; (4) creation of a system for screening Institutional Reports and Visiting Team Reports to reduce the incidence of incomplete reports; (5) revision
of evaluation procedures to encourage in-depth penetration by team members; (6) modification of training sessions to promote greater understanding of all requirements; (7) changes in present Visiting Team procedures to promote more efficient use of time; and (8) consideration of increasing the size of teams and extending the team visit by one day.

To improve its access to external levers of power, NCATE might explore ways to: (1) make the public more aware of its accreditation decisions by expanding its dissemination activities; (2) improve relationships with certain State Departments of Education; (3) develop a link between eligibility for Federal funds and accreditation by a recognized program-accrediting agency; (4) increase the number of school districts that require applicants for employment to be graduates of NCATE-accredited schools; and (5) develop alternative sources of funding for its accrediting activities to reduce dependence on institutions.

The major disadvantages of this third alternative are: (1) until alternative funding sources are found, resources for beginning to change procedures and initiating studies of how to improve access to other levers of power must come from within the organization; (2) institutions would have to bear additional costs if team size were increased and team visits were extended by one day; (3) constituent member dues might have to support some increase in NCATE headquarters staff to implement procedural changes; and (4) more rigorous evaluation might tax the limits of voluntary participation.
Regardless of the direction NCATE might choose, costs are involved. In weighing the costs and benefits, the report concludes, NCATE must first decide what role it wants to play in protecting the consumer from poor quality programs in professional education.
STATEMENT OF REACTION TO IRT STUDY

Resolution Adopted by the
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
October 20, 1980

1. History of the NCATE Study

This study originated on January 25, 1977, when the Council passed a motion (Fritschel/McDaniels) to sponsor "...a comprehensive study of national accreditation." It was prescribed that the "...study should address, but not be restricted to the following points: purposes of accreditation, including quality control, and stimulation for improvement; criteria for accrediability, including the reliability and validity of standards; procedures for accreditation, including program versus institutional accreditation, use of data retrieval systems, and audit techniques; governance of accreditation in teacher education; financial support; alternatives to NCATE; relationship to state agencies for certification; relationship to local employment agencies; role groups in accreditation, including trainees, practitioners, trainers, government agencies, and the public; and issues concerning overlapping jurisdictions between and among state, regional, and national accrediting groups."

It was recommended that the study be supervised by a Planning and Liaison Committee of nine persons selected as follows:

Three from the National Education Association (two from the Council and one non-Council person appointed by the NEA); three from the AACTE (two from the Council and one non-Council person appointed by AACTE); one representative from other Council constituents elected by constituent representatives; one individual representing the Council associate members elected by associate member representatives; and one at-large member appointed by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

A total of $7,000 was set aside for the purpose of initiating the study. Bids for the study were invited from the educational community at large. After a complex screening process, the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT) was selected as the agency to conduct the study, and monies were accorded the IRT to assist them in seeking greater fiscal support. Financing was ultimately acquired from the Ford Foundation as well as internal IRT funds, primarily from the National Institute of Education.

In the fall of 1978, the IRT developed a proposal for a comprehensive study of national accreditation, investigating the broad range of areas prescribed for study by the original Council
action. When only limited funding was acquired however, the original scope was greatly narrowed. On several occasions the Planning and Liaison Committee met with the IRT staff to approve modifications in the scope and direction of the study. Ultimately, the study was directed at Item 1 of the 1977 goals—the application of NCATE's standards and the effects of its procedures upon teacher education programs.

2. NCATE's Positive Performance

The report demonstrates positive NCATE performance in the following areas:

A. Present practice generally uncovers major problems in a teacher education program.

B. NCATE regulates some of the worst programs in professional education. Institutions denied accreditation suffer from numerous serious problems that run the gamut of NCATE's Standards. NCATE denial represents a clear signal to the public that a program is inferior (as judged by NCATE Standards).

C. The NCATE accreditation process is carried out in a professional manner. Participants apply the Standards in an objective way.

D. Institutions observed for this study and accredited by the Council generally benefited from the process in that they attempted to modify some parts of their programs in response to NCATE concerns.

E. Denial of accreditation has led to some modifications in programs, according to a random sample of institutions with one or more programs denied accreditation between 1974 and 1978.

3. NCATE's Concerns About the Report

A. The IRT study does not place NCATE's organization, size, operation, standards, denial rate, or processes in context with other accrediting agencies, state approval efforts, or other systems of evaluation in higher education. Consequently, the impression is left that problems common to all such evaluating systems are uniquely NCATE's. Conversely, the Council's accomplishments in such areas as enforcement of standards, appeals procedures, and efficiency and economy of operation go without comparative notice.
B. The IRT study appears to assume that the issue of voluntary/developmental versus mandatory/ regulatory postures has been decided in favor of the latter. While the Council's evolution in this regard clearly favors an increasing regulatory mode, developmental attributes are still present and championed by organizations and institutions alike. Their effects on Council processes and decisions are not described.

C. While many institutions fear that NCATE denies accreditation to deserving programs, the IRT study found no evidence that this was the case. Although this conclusion can be deduced from the study, the report does not underscore this highly positive finding to the degree that negative conclusions are emphasized. We find such imbalance unfortunately characterizes much of the report, although NCATE recognizes that it did request a review of problem areas in its processes and procedures.

4. Weaknesses in the NCATE Accreditation Process According to the IRT Study

The Council is committed to addressing the weaknesses in the NCATE process described in the report:

A. The predominance of an approach to accreditation that emphasizes whether a task or function is performed at all, rather than whether it is performed well as required by the NCATE Standards.

B. Vagueness in NCATE's Standards and their general organization that impede attempts to judge program quality.

C. Inappropriate institutional influence over the composition of evaluation teams, information available to the team and Council, and future participation of team members—all of which affect the ability of the Council to evaluate fully program compliance with NCATE Standards.

D. Certain dynamics in team visits and Council meetings that hamper thorough and complete examination of programs.

E. The consequences for the NCATE accreditation process of the failure of some teams to apply many requirements in the Standards, inconsistencies among teams in the application of the Standards, and any and all errors of process that result in the accreditation of programs that should be denied.

F. Over-dependency on factors of professional status, which has contributed to a relatively weak power base that detracts from NCATE's ability to improve programs of professional education.
5. **Next Steps**

NCATE finds the IRT study useful as a device for improving the conduct of its accreditation functions. In receiving the October 6th draft of the IRT study and in keeping with ongoing efforts to strengthen the impact of accreditation, NCATE will accelerate its review of standards and institutional review procedures. All Council members are encouraged to forward reactions and suggestions relative to the IRT study to the Council chair or director by December 1, 1980. To further facilitate the process of self-assessment, the Standards Committee is charged with reviewing all current standards in respect to the three recommendations of the IRT study. The report of the Standards Committee shall be an action agenda item at the next Council meeting.
Whereas the IRT study is of real value, has been completed, is in its final revision, and is due November 1, 1980, for submission to the Ford Foundation, the Executive Committee recommends that:

1. a review of the final document, its conclusions and recommendations be studied, analyzed, and developed into appropriate strategies for action by committees selected and assigned by the Executive Committee;

2. appreciation be expressed for the work and activities of the Planning and Liaison Committee; and

3. the Executive Committee be charged to move with all deliberate speed in the pursuit of further potential studies of accreditation issues with IRT or other research agencies.
IRT RESPONSE TO NCATE'S STATEMENT OF 

REACTION TO THE IRT STUDY

On October 20, 1980, after extensive review of a draft of this report, the NCATE Council approved a Statement of Reaction which contained three concerns. Each is addressed in turn:

1. NCATE Concern

The IRT study does not place NCATE's organization, size, operation, standards, denial rate, or processes in context with other accrediting agencies, state approval efforts, or other systems of evaluation in higher education. Consequently, the impression is left that problems common to all such evaluating systems are uniquely NCATE's. Conversely, the Council's accomplishments in such areas as enforcement of standards, appeals procedures, and efficiency and economy of operation go without comparative notice.

IRT Response

The IRT is sensitive to this concern. As noted in the Executive Summary, this report is only one of twelve interdependent studies proposed by the IRT in response to NCATE's original 1977 request for a comprehensive review of the accreditation process. Its focus is on NCATE. Pending funding, future studies will address such issues.

It can be noted that regional accrediting bodies (among other types of accrediting agencies) have been criticized in a recent General Accounting Office Report* and that this paper suggests problems in state agency review of programs (pp. 192-196). While no conclusions can be drawn from such limited data, their existence suggests the need for additional research, which might indeed show

that problems NCATE faces are common to all evaluating organizations. Such a study would also allow evaluation of NCATE's accomplishments from a comparative perspective.

2. NCATE Concern

The IRT study appears to assume that the issues of voluntary/developmental versus mandatory/regulatory postures has been decided in favor of the latter. While the Council's evolution in this regard clearly favors an increasing regulatory mode, developmental attributes are still present and championed by organizations and institutions alike. Their effects on Council processes and decisions are not described.

IRT Response

This study examines how NCATE applies its Standards and the effect of its process on the quality of programs in professional education. It is neither a historical study of NCATE nor a study of the validity of NCATE's Standards. Findings and recommendations for change should be reviewed in light of these limitations.

Within this context, the study relies on official Council declarations, speeches by the Director, and official NCATE documents that define its present mission, procedures, and responsibilities. Developmental attributes are described in the report (pp. 146-150) but are placed within the context of the prevailing regulatory posture. One alternative direction for change (improving the presence-absence approach) could be interpreted as a method for improving the developmental approach, while limiting the regulatory approach (pp. 200-201).

3. NCATE Concern

While many institutions fear that NCATE denies accreditation to deserving programs, the IRT study found no evidence that this was the case. Although this conclusion can be deduced from the study, the report does not underscore this highly positive finding to the degree that negative conclusions are emphasized. We find such imbalance unfortunately characterizes much of the report, although NCATE recognizes that it did request a review of problem areas in its processes and procedures.
IRT Response

IRT agrees that some readers may wish to draw this conclusion, but believes to do so would mean going beyond the data. The study showed that present practice generally uncovers major problems in a program. It showed that institutions denied accreditation suffer from numerous serious problems that run the gamut of NCATE's Standards. The report concludes, therefore, that NCATE denial represents a clear signal to the public that a program is inferior (as judged by NCATE Standards). This conclusion rests on interviews with program staff at institutions denied NCATE accreditation that accepted such decisions or appealed them but lost. Such program staff were found to agree with nearly every weakness identified by NCATE (p. 195).

This conclusion is different, however, from saying that NCATE never denies accreditation to deserving programs. Since NCATE Standards are applied in two different ways (the presence-or-absence approach and the in-depth approach), it is possible for a team that uses the presence-or-absence approach to find few weaknesses, but an Audit Committee that uses the in-depth approach to find many. This could lead to Council denial of accreditation, an action that might be questioned by an Appeals Board because favorable evidence available to the team was not available to the Audit Committee. Subsequent Council consideration could lead to accreditation. The text (p. 103) shows this sequence of events does occur. Observation of Council debates shows the organization is well aware of this problem, but has yet to devise a satisfactory solution. At the October 1980 meeting, the issue was again referred to committee for further study.

Finally, the IRT takes exception to the statement, "We find such imbalance unfortunately characterizes much of the report, although NCATE recognizes that it did request a review of problem areas in its processes and procedures."

NCATE requested a comprehensive study of the accreditation process. This first study of NCATE examined how NCATE applied its Standards and the effect of its process on the quality of programs of professional education. It was not designed to find problem areas. The results show that more problems than strengths were discovered, and both were reported.
The IRT wishes to express its pleasure that the Council, after detailed review of the final draft of this report, has found the study to be a useful device for improving the conduct of its accreditation functions, and has committed itself to address the weaknesses described in the report. It also notes that the Council, in a separate resolution, acknowledged the study to be of real value.
Research Series No. 92

NCATE: DOES IT MATTER?

Christopher W. Wheeler

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Researchers from such diverse disciplines as educational psychology, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy cooperate in conducting IRT research. They join forces with public school teachers, who work at the IRT as half-time collaborators in research, helping to design and plan studies, collect data, analyze and interpret results, and disseminate findings.

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JUDY, PERRY AND ROSS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is one of a number proposed by the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT) in response to a 1977 NCATE request for a comprehensive evaluation of the accreditation process, including an evaluation of NCATE's own procedures and those of other accrediting organizations (including regional agencies and State Departments of Education). NCATE requested that the comprehensive study also suggest new directions for improving the quality of professional programs for educators. This first study, which focused on NCATE, was funded jointly by the Ford Foundation and the Institute for Research on Teaching.

NCATE's request for a study is consistent with its approach to organizational change and improvement through accreditation. At the heart of its accreditation process is the requirement that an institution prepare a self-study report for review by a Visiting Team and the NCATE Council. While the study reported here is only a part of the entire proposed scope of work, it does represent a "self-study" of NCATE as it attempts to carry out its mandate to protect the public from poor quality programs in professional education.

It is important to acknowledge the assistance NCATE has given this project. Research on organizational behavior is dependent on access to materials and cooperation from participants. This study has
had both. Lyn Cubser, Doran Christiansen, and David Poisson of NCATE headquarters provided unrestricted access to all records, meetings, and discussions necessary for understanding how the organization works. They demonstrated a commitment to serious scholarship by their willingness to provide time for interviews, assistance in gaining permission from institutions to be observed as they went through the accreditation process, and a work environment conducive to independent inquiry. Representatives of institutions, members of Visiting Teams, and participants on the NCATE Council were imposed on numerous times for information. They were always open and helpful.

In addition, Council members provided criticism of an interim report and a draft of the final report, which improved my understanding of the accreditation process. A subcommittee of the NCATE Standards Committee carefully reviewed findings contained in the interim report and provided numerous comments. The entire Standards Committee as well as the Process and Evaluation Committee reviewed a draft of the final report extensively and made many helpful suggestions.

I am indebted to many people at the Institute for Research on Teaching for their thoughtful and valuable assistance during the study. Judith Lanier, Co-Director of the Institute and now Acting Dean of the College of Education, was responsible for developing the IRT's response to NCATE's original study request. She played a leadership role in conceptualizing this particular study of NCATE and in securing joint funding from the Ford Foundation. Her contributions to the content of the report were numerous and substantial. Without her support,
guidance, and assistance this study would not have been possible.

Judith Lanier also assembled an outstanding core group from the IRT who worked with her and this researcher from the beginning. Nancy Brubaker, Robert Floden, and John Schwille provided that essential blend of encouragement, insight, criticism, discipline, and humor for which researchers are grateful. They assisted in the design of the research, reviewed the work as it progressed, and criticized both the interim report and the final draft. Their comments saved me from numerous errors.

Other members of the IRT also contributed in significant ways to this project. Lee Shulman and Susan Melnick provided a thorough critique of the final draft, which improved it in many ways. James Buschman kindly agreed to attend one Council meeting to assist me in observing Audit Committees as they reviewed institutions that were a part of this research. His skills in participant observation provided important data on how the process worked. Philip Cusick, Larry Lezotte, and Andrew Porter participated in one or more work groups to review the progress of the study and its findings. In addition to these IRT staff, Laurence Brown (Indiana University) and Curtis Van Voorhees (University of Michigan) participated in these sessions. I gratefully acknowledge their comments, criticisms, and assistance.

Marjorie Martus of the Ford Foundation proved to be an ideal project officer. She reviewed both the interim report and the final draft carefully and provided insights which were subsequently incorporated in the paper. It was a pleasure working with her.

A special note of thanks are due Kenneth McNeil, Linda McNeil,
and William Spady. Their thoughtful comments on various drafts significantly improved the final product.

Credit for much of the merit of this study lies with these people; responsibility for the faults and errors that remain belong to me.

Thanks are also due Gail Nutter of the IRT. She managed the bureaucratic intricacies of this project with her usual skill and thereby prevented many "unintended consequences" from delaying the work. She also managed the production of the final draft, which ensured adequate Council deliberation of the findings before the report was made public.

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My own "core group," Penny, Laura, Alison, Susan, and Rachel Wheeler, deserve special acknowledgement. The fieldwork and writing deadlines necessitated numerous absences from my family. Their patience, understanding, and support made this study a reality.
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INTRODUCTION
This is a study of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). It examines how NCATE applies its Standards and the effect of its process on the quality of programs in professional education.

From 1974 to the present numerous changes have occurred in NCATE that suggest the organization has begun to enforce its Standards more vigorously: its leaders have sought to create a new public image, its procedures have been altered, and decisions to deny accreditation have increased.*

In 1979, before the 32nd Annual Texas Conference on Teacher Education, NCATE's Director stated the organization's commitment to enforcement in the following way:

...[C]learly, the most dramatic change has come with NCATE's recognition as a standard-bearer in consumer protection. The National Council has officially pledged to defend the rights, responsibilities, and interests of the general public, of students, and of all parties having an interest in programs for the preparation of personnel for our nation's schools.

...In seeking to protect the public interest, the National Council has assumed and been assigned by both the Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation and the U.S. Office of Education the role of adjudging the quality of programs that prepare American teachers and school support personnel. NCATE accreditation now certifies to the public that programs have been evaluated and found to meet minimum standards of quality and are appropriate for the preparation of professionals and deserving of public trust and support.

---

*NCATE was formed in 1952 and began to accredit programs in 1954. NCATE's history to 1964 was described by John Mayor in his study, Accreditation in Teacher Education--Its Influence on Higher Education (Washington, D.C.: The National Commission on Accrediting, 1965). NCATE's history to the present will be covered in a dissertation study underway by NCATE's Associate Director.
Being a national, nongovernmental accrediting agency, NCATE has been successful in making accreditation decisions stick. Our belief is that we can give assistance to states in "taking the heat" for decisive action in curtailing ineffective and inefficient preparation programs. NCATE has demonstrated that it can withstand the pressure of withdrawing accreditation of programs that cannot be professionally defended.

During the period 1974-78, NCATE's procedures for accreditation underwent significant change. Provisional (or conditional) accreditation was discontinued as an option; programs now are either granted or denied accreditation. Institutional reports now must follow a common format, and institutions must address every standard. Teams now report findings standard-by-standard, make judgments on strengths and weaknesses, and reach consensus on whether requirements are met. Successful completion of an NCATE training session is required by NCATE staff and constituent groups for participation on an NCATE Visiting Team. Council proceedings (except accreditation actions, including Audit Committee deliberations, and personnel matters) are now open to the public, and, while NCATE policy limits information on Council decisions, some newspapers recently have carried stories on NCATE actions with respect to specific schools.

Finally, NCATE's decisions to deny accreditation have increased in the past few years. As Table 1 shows, over the period 1974-78, NCATE denied accreditation to nearly one in five institutions presenting one or more programs for accreditation, in contrast to a 1954-73 rate of one in ten. (In 1979, the denial rate was 20 percent.)

While an analysis of the reasons behind these changes lies outside the scope of this report, the existence of changes provides ample justification for a study of their effects. NCATE appears to have the potential for affecting significantly the quality of professional personnel who
TABLE 1
NCATE Accreditation Decisions, 1954–73 and 1974–78

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number Accredited</th>
<th>Number Denied Accreditation</th>
<th>Percent Denied Accreditation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954–73</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions Presenting One or More Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974–78</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions Presenting One or More Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Tabulations from NCATE's school accreditation record books.

enter our school systems.

This study found that this potential is realized, in part, for there are numerous strengths in the NCATE accreditation process. Present practice generally uncovers major problems in a program. Programs denied accreditation suffer from numerous serious problems that run the gamut of NCATE's Standards. NCATE denial represents a clear signal to the public that a program is inferior (as judged by NCATE Standards). In this sense, NCATE regulates some of the worst programs of professional education.*

A second strength of the NCATE accreditation process lies in the professional nature by which the process is carried out. Visiting Teams

*Other institutions with inferior programs may never submit them for NCATE accreditation. At the present time, over 1,100 institutions offer programs of professional education; NCATE accredits programs at only 537 institutions. However, it is estimated that between 70 and 80 percent of the new graduates in teacher education each year come from NCATE-approved programs.

Fear of denial is only one probable reason some institutions do not seek NCATE accreditation. Other institutions define their mission in areas NCATE does not emphasize (e.g., research). For that reason, they may see little value in NCATE accreditation. Others may feel NCATE evaluation is too expensive. Finally (but without exhausting the possibilities), others may feel that since state agencies have the legal responsibility for certifying graduates, they need be responsive only to Standards set by those agencies.
and Council members work hard at what they do. Within constraints described in the chapters that follow, they examine many components of a program. They are trained and seek to apply Standards in an objective fashion.

A third strength is revealed in the finding that institutions observed for this study and accredited by the Council generally benefitted from the process, in the sense that they attempted to modify some parts of their program(s) in response to NCATE concerns.

A fourth strength stems from the finding that denial of accreditation led to some modifications of programs (according to a random sample of institutions with one or more programs denied NCATE accreditation between 1974 and 1978).

In addition to working to protect the public from poor quality programs through the accreditation process, NCATE recently has taken a leadership role in criticizing and exposing the practices of bogus institutions. Under its present Director, NCATE has responded to a growing number of complaints from those victimized by so-called "universities" offering mail-order diplomas and spurious degrees. Staff have testified before Federal agencies, written articles for national journals, provided background information to news organizations investigating abuses, and given speeches on the subject. NCATE's headquarters is now viewed by many as a center for information on such practices.

One result of NCATE's efforts has been an increase in prestige. In May 1980, NCATE announced three new openings for Associate Member positions on the Council. Response was immediate. By September, eight organizations had submitted or were preparing applications. Institutions
are seeking NCATE accreditation in greater numbers. During each academic year, NCATE evaluates programs at sixty to seventy institutions. For the academic year 1980-81, fifteen additional schools have applied for initial accreditation. More than ever before, institutions planning to undergo NCATE evaluation are attending workshops on accreditation procedures. Institutions within states (Ohio) and within conferences (the "Big 10") have even held meetings to discuss the implications of the changing NCATE for their own programs. Finally, the Office of Education, in unconditionally granting renewal to NCATE as a nationally recognized accrediting agency for a period of four years, praised the organization and found that NCATE served clearly identified needs.

But as the chapters that follow make clear, there are some critical weaknesses in the NCATE accreditation process. The study found that NCATE Visiting Team and Council members generally look to see whether a task or function is performed at all, not, as the NCATE Standards require, whether it is being performed well. This "presence-or-absence" approach to applying the Standards is pursued for many reasons, only several of which are summarized here: (1) the Standards are vague, which discourages attempts to judge the quality of programs; (2) institutions have some influence over the information made available to team and Council members, which in turn affects their ability to judge the quality of programs; and (3) the dynamics of team visits and Council meetings virtually preclude in-depth examination of programs. While there were instances of in-depth examination, they were overshadowed by the prevalence of the "presence-or-absence" approach.
The study found that the "presence-or-absence" approach, while identifying many obvious weaknesses and generally leading to denial of accreditation for programs clearly inferior by NCATE Standards, also results in accreditation of programs with problems as severe as those denied. This raises the question of whether NCATE's stamp of accreditation is a meaningful indicator of quality.

Finally, the study showed that NCATE's effect on program quality is very limited. Its power base of professional authority proved weaker than the economic or legal authority exercised by other "levers of power" affecting programs of professional preparation (e.g., legislative action, competition from neighboring institutions, regulatory powers of State Departments of Education and alumni, among other "levers").

It was found that if accreditation seemed likely, institutions responded to the Visiting Teams' findings by selecting weaknesses to be addressed according to what they considered important, not necessarily what NCATE considered the most serious weaknesses. If denial appeared to be a real possibility, institutions addressed more weaknesses of a more serious nature. When the Council accredited programs, changes beyond those already in the works did not occur; in fact, when accreditation seemed in danger but was granted, change came to a halt, or even regressed. When accreditation was denied, institutions gave a second look at weaknesses identified by NCATE; they responded either by making numerous changes or by doing nothing at all. When change occurred, it generally involved outside "levers of power," as administrators sought to minimize any potential negative effects on student enrollment. In such cases, NCATE's role was more
indirect than direct, often serving to trigger the other levers.

These weaknesses are related to three major constraints that shape the organization's activity. The first is power. NCATE's power rests ultimately on professional authority. Unlike an organization with legal authority, NCATE can only recommend and suggest, not command, that change be made. While such a power base is important, this study found that reliance on professional authority alone results in limited institutional change.

The second constraint involves money. NCATE's financial base depends heavily on revenue from the institutions it accredits. Approximately one-half its annual funds comes from institutions, with the other half contributed by constituent organizations that make up the Council. NCATE's Director has repeatedly pointed out the possible tension between efforts to regulate the marketplace (which imply higher denial rates), and continued institutional support for NCATE's activities.

The third constraint relates to NCATE operations. NCATE is an organization run primarily on volunteer help. Visiting Team, Audit Committee, and Council members all contribute their time as a part of their professional responsibility for improving programs for professional educators. There are limits to the demands NCATE can place on those who carry out its policies.

These constraints must be kept in mind as the findings of this study are reviewed. They are important when considering possible reforms.

But constraints need not breed pessimism. NCATE has made numerous changes in recent years in an effort to monitor more effectively the
quality of programs for professional educators. Moreover, its constituent members include a wide spectrum of organizations involved in the training of teachers and learning support personnel: public school teachers, teacher educators, students, school psychologists, administrators, counselors, chief state school officers, special educators, institutional officers, public representatives and school board members. In contrast with most nongovernmental agencies that attempt to police their own ranks, NCATE's base is broader than simply the institutions it seeks to regulate. To some degree, NCATE can be the master of its own destiny.

This study has two limitations. It is only one of twelve interdependent studies proposed by the IRT in response to NCATE's original 1977 request for a comprehensive review of the accreditation process. Thus, the report does not place NCATE's activities in context with other evaluation agencies. This could lead to the impression that problems described here are uniquely NCATE's.

This may not be the case. Regional accrediting bodies (among several types of accrediting agencies) have been criticized in a recent General Accounting Office Report,* and this paper (pp. 192-196) suggests problems in state agency review of programs. While no conclusions can be drawn from such limited data, their existence suggests the need for additional research, which might show that problems NCATE faces are common to all evaluating organizations. Such a study would also allow evaluation of NCATE's accomplishments from a comparative perspective.

The second limitation concerns the scope of the study itself. It

---

examined how NCATE applies its Standards and the effect of its process on the quality of programs in professional education. It was neither a historical study of NCATE nor a study of the validity of NCATE's Standards. Findings and recommendations for change should be viewed from this perspective. For example, some participants in the NCATE process, after reviewing a draft of this report, suggested that over the years NCATE's Standards may have had a positive effect, which is not discussed here. By addressing areas such as governance and evaluation and planning, NCATE's Standards, they believe, may have encouraged schools to consider such issues separate from any NCATE review and to modify their programs accordingly. A study of NCATE's history might have provided the opportunity to evaluate this potential area of influence.

This report is divided into four parts. First, NCATE's accreditation procedures are examined. Then the consequences of the prevailing approach to accreditation are discussed. This is followed by an evaluation of NCATE's effects on professional education programs. Finally, possible directions for reform are described.
PART I

NCATE'S APPROACH TO ACCREDITATION
OVERVIEW

Members of NCATE Visiting Teams, Audit Committees, and the Council use two different approaches to evaluate programs submitted for accreditation. The first is a "presence-or-absence" approach, which has the following characteristics:

- Judgments are made on whether a task or function is performed at all, not on how well it is performed. In so doing, participants generally accept virtually any claim of program attention to some of the requirements of a specific Standard;

- Quality indicators in the Standards are neither operationalized nor applied, with the result that many requirements are never evaluated;

- Evidence is gathered and judgments are made on the Standards as if their requirements were discrete entities, and no effort is made to relate requirements in one Standard to requirements in another;

- Accreditation is recommended or denied on the basis of the number of Standards not met.

The second approach examines programs in greater depth. This "in-depth" approach has the following characteristics:

- Judgments are made on how well a task or function is performed. In so doing, participants typically require substantiation of claims;

- Quality indicators in the Standards are operationalized and applied; as a result, most requirements in the Standards are evaluated;

- Evidence is gathered and judgments are made on Standards as they relate to requirements in other Standards; and

- Recommendations for accreditation or denial are made on the basis of how much the identified weaknesses, considered together, affect overall program quality.
The essence of these two approaches is captured in the following dialogue between two members of an Audit Committee:

You know, I am very reluctant to consider denying accreditation to a program that has failed to meet only three Standards.

Yes, but I think we ought to look at which Standards those are and how they affect the overall quality of the program. Besides, there are a lot of weaknesses in other parts of the program.¹

Part I shows there are many reasons why the first approach prevails at every level of the NCATE accreditation process.
CHAPTER 1

THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS AND NCATE STANDARDS

How does the NCATE accreditation process work? What are the Standards? What do they require? These questions are addressed in this chapter.

1. The NCATE Accreditation Process

The NCATE accreditation process involves five steps:

1. The institution prepares a report (Institutional Report) on each program presented for accreditation. The report addresses every NCATE Standard in turn, describing how each is being met.

2. An NCATE team visits the campus for three or four days to interview institutional personnel, check records, study catalogs, visit with students, and attend committee meetings. The team is to verify and validate the Institutional Report, determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program as revealed by an application of the Standards, and determine whether the programs meet the requirements of each Standard.

3. The team submits a report to NCATE headquarters within 21 days of the visit, and the institution receives a copy 30 days after the visit. The institution is required to file a rejoinder to the team report with the NCATE Council, which makes decisions on accreditation.

4. The Council meets three times a year for three and a half days. Most decisions on accreditation are made at the March and June meetings. Six to eight weeks before a Council meeting members are assigned to Audit Committees composed of three members each; every committee is assigned a certain number of institutions, and committee
members review materials on these institutions. During the first day of the Council meeting, the committees meet separately to develop recommendations. The full Council spends the next two days reviewing these recommendations and making decisions on accreditation.

5. Institutions denied accreditation can have decisions reviewed by an Appeals Board Panel. Should the Panel rule in favor of the institution on any part of its case, the Council reviews its earlier decision at its next regularly scheduled meeting. It may decide to reaffirm its initial decision to deny accreditation, to reverse its initial decision and grant accreditation, or to review the entire case at its next regularly scheduled meeting. If it decides to review the case, its decision, at the end of the review, to accredit or deny, is final.

2. NCATE Standards and Their Requirements

NCATE's Standards address the process of education, not its outcomes. They derive their validity from a consensus of professional judgment drawn from a diverse set of professional organizations.

There are two sets of Standards, one for basic degree programs (generally undergraduate) and one for advanced degree programs (usually graduate). Each set consists of 24 Standards arranged by "families" of component and subcomponent parts. While the two sets are generally the same in form and content, each has a number of specific provisions that apply only to that particular degree level.

The Standards represent a straightforward approach to defining essential ingredients of an educational experience. Taking each "family" of Standards in turn, we find:

- Governance requires those teaching in the program to exercise major responsibility, through a unit, for the design, approval, evaluation, and development of that program;
Curricula requires those responsible for the program to design their program so students: develop competencies to perform effectively as teachers; learn about multicultural concerns; receive a balance between academic and professional courses; develop an approach to teaching and have an opportunity to test and refine such an approach through field experience, including a practicum; and participate in the development and evaluation of programs.

Faculty requires those teaching in the program to demonstrate adequate scholarly preparation, professional preparation, professional experience, scholarly activities, and an ongoing involvement with schools. In addition, the institution must show that it has provided faculty with a work environment conducive to effective teaching and scholarly production.

Students requires those participating in the program to be admitted according to stated admission requirements, to be evaluated regularly, and to receive the benefits of an effective advising system.

Resources requires the institution to provide a library and a media and materials center, as well as appropriate office and classroom space; and

Evaluation and Planning requires those responsible for the program to evaluate students as they progress through the program and after they have entered the marketplace, to use such data to improve the programs, and to develop long-range plans for the teacher education programs.

The Council has taken this process-oriented approach to developing Standards because of the difficulty inherent in establishing causal links between training programs and subsequent teacher performance in the classroom. In using consensus validity, the Council has involved numerous professional groups who train teachers and school support personnel in the process of defining and elaborating on these major areas. This reflects the Council's belief that procedures performed well will lead to quality training programs, which in turn will produce graduates able to perform
well in the classroom.

That NCATE expects a high level of procedural performance is clear from its instructions to Visiting Team and Council members on how to judge whether a program has met a Standard. It is also reflected in the numerous requirements in every "family's" component and subcomponent Standards. Finally, it is evident in the requirement that one Standard be related to another when evidence is gathered and judgments on compliance are made.

NCATE defines very specifically for Visiting Team and Council members their responsibilities with respect to evaluating whether a program has met an NCATE Standard:

- If the program meets all of the component requirements of the Standard, it is considered adequate and no comment is necessary.

- If, in addition to meeting the requirements of each component of the Standard, the program exhibits features or characteristics which add to the quality of the program, such features and characteristics are considered strengths.

- If the program fails to meet some of the requirements for the component of the Standard, or exhibits features or characteristics which detract from the effectiveness of the program, such unmet requirements and detracting features or characteristics are considered weaknesses.² [Emphasis added]

NCATE's intent is clear: Programs undergoing accreditation must meet all the requirements of every Standard. Should they fail to do so, a weakness must be noted, and this could lead to the Standard being judged not met. That NCATE requirements for each Standard are numerous can be seen by examining several component Standards in the Curricula "family" (Standard 2), noting the many requirements and
showing how they relate to one another as well as to requirements in other "families."

Component 2.1 (Design of Curricula) requires those responsible for the teacher education program to review the program to ensure that students develop competencies to perform adequately later as teachers. The Standard reads:

Curricula for the preparation of teachers are composed of several components combined in patterns designed to achieve specified objectives. Each component is included because it has a direct relationship to the explicit objective. The institution is able to state the assumptions underlying the contribution of any particular component. In addition to these components, a multicultural dimension is a planned and integral part of the teacher education programs.

Teacher education curricula are based on explicit objectives that reflect the institution's conception of the teacher's role. There is a direct and obvious relationship between these objectives and the components of the curricula.³

To evaluate compliance with this Standard, a Visiting Team should see if those responsible for the program have:

- Defined the major components of the role they expect graduates to play as teachers;
- Developed clearly stated objectives to create student competencies (especially in the multicultural area) so roles can be performed effectively; and
- Structured courses and field experiences to accomplish these objectives.

In addition, team members should ask officials to describe and discuss the assumptions underlying the program objectives and the contributions of each aspect of the program. Finally, because the requirements in component 2.1 are linked to requirements in the Evaluation and Planning "family,"
team members must review requirements there as well. Thus, they should ask officials to show that strategies for evaluating graduates of the program (component 6.1) were designed to provide evidence of their performance in relation to program objectives and that such information was in fact used (component 6.2) on a regular basis to modify and improve program objectives.

While component 2.1 describes the procedures that should be used to design a sound curriculum, subcomponent 2.1.1, Multicultural Education, prescribes a content area that must be covered. In one sense, the Standard is quite general and all encompassing:

The institution gives evidence of planning for multicultural education in its teacher education curriculum including both the general and professional studies component.

Students should learn something about the culturally pluralistic world in which they live if they are to teach youngsters from different backgrounds effectively—such is the essence of this Standard. But the requirements become more numerous and somewhat more specific. Particular courses are not described in detail, but certain competencies are required. Those responsible for the program must show that it:

- Prepares students in both the national and international dimensions of culturally diverse environments;

- Provides for instruction in multicultural issues in courses, seminars, directed readings, laboratory and clinical experiences, practicum and other types of field experience, including, but not limited to, experiences which:
  - Promote analytical and evaluative abilities to confront issues such as participatory democracy, racism and sexism, and the parity of power;
- Develop skills for values clarification including the study of the manifest and latent transmission of values;

- Examine the dynamics of diverse cultures and the implications for developing teaching strategies; and

- Examine linguistic variations and diverse learning styles as a basis for the development of appropriate teaching strategies; and

- Uses both short-term strategies and ongoing assessments in this area as a reflection of a conscious intervention strategy.\(^5\)

Furthermore, attention to multicultural issues is not to be restricted to Standard 2.1.1. Components in every other family of Standards require attention to multicultural issues. Thus, a generally weak effort in Standard 2.1.1 could well affect NCATE judgment on the quality of performance in a number of areas. Once again, a general concept—that knowledge of other cultures will improve the quality of teaching—is translated into a number of requirements.

Standard 2.3, the Professional Studies component of the Curricula Standard, provides a third illustration of how straightforward ideas about what constitutes a minimum effort on a task or function are elaborated to require a high level of performance.

As noted earlier, students as a part of their training are expected to develop an approach to teaching and to be provided an opportunity for testing and refining that approach through field experiences, including a practicum. The specific requirements for the practicum experience (Standard 2.3.4) are quite demanding:

- The student tests and reconstructs the theory s/he has developed;
• The student assumes major responsibility for the full range of teaching during the practicum experience over an extended period of time;

• The student is supervised by college personnel who themselves have experience with elementary and secondary teaching and are involved with schools in an ongoing way;

• The student is supervised by experienced, certificated personnel from the cooperating schools;

• The school personnel have been screened and selected according to explicit criteria;

• The institution selects the cooperating schools and can show it has developed effective working relationships with such schools.7

In short, the Professional Studies component of each curricula area requires that the program "provides prospective teachers with direct, substantial, quality participation in teaching over an extended period of time ...."7 The practicum, specifically, is to be a more complete and concrete learning activity than a laboratory or clinical experience.

But there is more. Requirements in the practicum subcomponent are directly related to requirements in another subcomponent, The Teaching and Learning Theory with Laboratory and Clinical Experience (2.3.3). It is here that different approaches to teaching are to be examined and the process of developing an approach has its origin. It is also here that the student has a first opportunity to translate his/her approach into practice. This opportunity might be provided through early field experience (e.g., classroom observation or aide work) or through micro-teaching, or both. To benefit from either experience, the student also must have a solid foundation in media skills,
a requirement in subcomponent 2.3.3 (which in turn is related to another family of Standards). Thus, to determine if the practicum requirement had been met (e.g., whether the student had tested and reconstructed the theory s/he had developed) the team must thoroughly investigate subcomponent 2.3.3 as well, for the two are inextricably linked. To illustrate, if the team found that students had not been exposed to different approaches to teaching, had not had an opportunity to try out different approaches before the practicum, and had not developed competencies in media skills, then it is unlikely it would find that students had effectively tested and reconstructed any theory.

And so it goes throughout the Standards. On one level the basic requirements are straightforward and general: a task or function must be performed. But in each component of every family of Standards there are requirements that call for the program to demonstrate a high level of performance.

How, then, do Visiting Teams, Audit Committees, and Council members carry out the mandate that tasks or functions be performed with quality as they go about the business of evaluating programs? This question is addressed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 2

PREVALENCE OF THE PRESENCE-OR-ABSENCE APPROACH

On most NCATE Visiting Teams and Audit Committees, a "presence-or-absence" approach to evaluating programs predominates. Quality indicators in the Standards are neither operationalized nor applied, with the result that many requirements in the Standards are never evaluated. Standards are treated as if their requirements are discrete entities, and no effort is made to relate requirements in one Standard to requirements in another. Decisions on whether a Standard has been met or a program is accreditable are made by tallying weaknesses or Standards not met. If the number of weaknesses is small, the team judges the Standard as met; if the number of Standards not met is small, the Audit Committee recommends accreditation. For both groups, the major emphasis is on whether a task or function has been performed at all, not on how well it has been performed.

In contrast, on a handful of teams and Audit Committees, an "in-depth" approach prevails: they operationalize and apply quality indicators, gather evidence and make judgments across Standards, and make decisions on the basis of the overall effects weaknesses have on the programs. Such teams and Audit Committees generally look to see how well a task or function has been performed.
It should be noted, however, that some teams and Audit Committees where the presence-or-absence approach prevails investigate some Standards in depth, and some teams and Audit Committees where the in-depth approach prevails examine some Standards only superficially. In short, both approaches are followed at each level, but one clearly prevails.

Most Council deliberations are routine. Recommendations of Audit Committee chairpersons are accepted and approved—except when the in-depth approach prevails. In those instances, the Council spends much time reviewing the Audit Committee's findings, and decisions may or may not follow the committee's recommendations.

These generalizations rest on:

Observation of eight NCATE Visiting Teams, fifteen Audit Committees, and four Council meetings during the period May 1979 through July 1980;*

*During the academic year 1979-80, NCATE reviewed programs at 68 institutions. The eight institutions selected for study were generally representative of the group in terms of size, type, and geographic location of institution, affiliation of team chairperson, and type of visit and are described as follows:

-Three large institutions (one state, one regional, and one private university, each also having off-campus programs) and five small institutions (four private liberal arts colleges and one public state university). Seven with predominantly white students and one with predominantly minority students. Four church-related institutions and four secular institutions.

-One institution from the East, four from the South, one from the Midwest, and two from the West.

-Five team chairpersons affiliated with AACTE, three with NEA.

-Five visits sponsored solely by NCATE, three sponsored by NCATE and the respective State Departments of Education.

Seven of the institutions were randomly selected within these categories; one was purposefully chosen because it provided an opportunity to compare two teams as they evaluated the same issue: the effects of a state-mandated Teacher Center on the practicum experience of each school. With one exception, team members were observed as they applied the Standards. Specific attention was given to how the Curricula family was applied at the basic level. In one case, observation was carried out while participating as a team member responsible for evaluating one part of a single program.
Over 200 interviews with participants in the NCATE accreditation process;** and

Archival research at NCATE's headquarters.

This chapter contains numerous illustrations of the two approaches at the team and Audit Committee levels. It sets the stage for chapter 3, which addresses the question: Why does the presence-or-absence approach usually prevail at every level of the accreditation process?

1. Examples of the Presence-or-Absence Approach Among Visiting Teams

Briefly, when Standards are evaluated by the presence-or-absence approach, the Visiting Team process works in the following way: Team members interview area representatives or department chairpersons (area representatives typically are responsible for a group of specialties comprising, for example, secondary education). Seldom are interviews

*(cont.)

Four Council meetings were attended and the following activities were observed:

1. Audit Committees (those reviewing programs for the eight team visits and seven additional Audit Committees reviewing programs from other institutions);

2. Committee meetings (Executive Committee, Standards Committee, Process and Evaluation Committee, Complaint Review Committee, Constitution and By-Laws Committee, and Futures Committee);

3. Council deliberations on accreditation as well as other issues; and

4. Informal caucus meetings of special interest group.

Two training sessions were attended, one for prospective team members and one for team chairpersons.

Two sets of Appeals Board hearings.

Appendix D describes in greater detail the methods used in this study.

**The figure does not include 84 interviews carried out as a part of a random sample of institutions denied NCATE accreditation between 1974 and 1978. Results of this study, as well as the sampling procedure, are described in Part III.
conducted with individual faculty members from a specific department (unless
the program is small). Claims made during these interviews generally are
accepted at face value, which means that policy implementation is seldom
studied in any detail. While documents (transcripts, faculty vitae, and
student dissertations) may be reviewed, such a review is on a limited basis.
For Standards requiring visits to school sites and interviews with super-
visory teachers in the field, examination generally is confined to dis-
cussion of the overall level of preparation of all students rather than of
students from particular specialties. For Standards requiring assessment
of resources, the resources are examined from the perspective of the general
needs of the entire set of programs rather than the requirements of specific
specialties.

The result is that most teams and team members generally accept
virtually any claim of program attention to some of the requirements
of a specific Standard. When such evidence is provided, the Standard
is judged to be met. When it is absent or when it is apparent to all
that performance is woefully inadequate, the Standard is judged not
met.

The illustrations that follow come almost exclusively from team
visits where the presence-or-absence approach prevailed. One example
from a team that examined most of the Standards in depth is included to
show that the process is identical, regardless of the overall approach
of the team.*

*On seven of the eight teams, the presence-or-absence approach pre-
vailed. However, these teams did investigate some Standards in depth—an
average of 3-5 out of 24 Standards at the basic level. The team that used
the in-depth approach evaluated 14 of the 24 Standards in depth at the
basic level.
As discussed earlier, the Governance family requires a teacher education program (defined as a unit) to demonstrate that it has primary responsibility for the "design, approval, and continuous evaluation and development of the teacher education program." At one institution (a state university), the evidence was overwhelming that the College of Education, at both the basic and advanced degree levels, did not exercise primary responsibility over these areas. In justifying its decision that the Standard was not met at the basic level, the Visiting Team reported:

The Institutional Report (Volume 1, p. 72) claims that "the College of Education exercises direct governance over all basic teacher education programs...." Using the NCATE Standards (p. 3) descriptions and definitions of governance, the team concludes that there is no evidence to support the contention that the College of Education is charged to serve as the single unit responsible for university-wide teacher education programs at the basic level; nor has any one person been officially assigned the overall responsibility for managing, administering, and coordinating the design, approval, and continuous evaluation of teacher education programs at the basic level. The Institutional Report (Volume 1, p. 71) acknowledges that there are several programs outside the jurisdiction of the College of Education. An example, the B.F.A. program in Art Education graduates the majority of art education majors; it is outside the College of Education. The same may be said for health and physical education programs. While the College of Education appears to serve as the "certifying agent" (Institutional Report, Volume 1, p. 71), that review function is contingent on a graduate's request to seek certification within the State of ______ and may not likely occur if a student seeks accreditation in another state accepting NCATE reciprocity. The matter is further complicated when the M.A.T. program is also used as a route to initial certification at the basic level (the M.A.T. will be more fully discussed under Advanced Programs, but it is, in part, an alternate route to complete teacher education at the basic level). In that light, then, it is also important to note that the claim on p. 82 (Institutional Report, Volume 1) that "all the
basic teacher education programs are found within the curriculum and instruction area" is not accurate.\textsuperscript{1}

The Design of Curricula component (2.1) of the Curricula family described earlier requires "explicit objectives that reflect the institution's conception of the teacher's role."\textsuperscript{2} Moreover, there must be "a direct and obvious relationship between these objectives and the components of the curriculum."\textsuperscript{3} On one visit, final judgments on the Standard were withheld until the last day of the visit, just prior to presentation of the Exit Report to the university, to allow departments to develop and submit program objectives. When these arrived, they were quickly reviewed and approved. No effort was made to interview faculty to determine what roles the faculty expected prospective teachers to play. No effort was made to determine whether these program objectives were reflected in specific course offerings. For departments where objectives were not forthcoming, the Standard was judged not met.\textsuperscript{4}

Component 2.4 in the Curricula family, Use of Guidelines Developed by National Learned Societies, requires:

- Teaching faculty responsible for designing the curriculum to be familiar with the guidelines and recommendations of professional associations and national learned societies;

- Such faculty to provide an explicit rationale for selecting and implementing pertinent sets of recommendations for each teacher education program; or

- An explicit rationale for not including such recommendations.\textsuperscript{5}

On several teams, those responsible for investigating this Standard noted that the Institutional Report mentioned associations to which
various faculty belonged and assumed that this meant that the faculty were familiar with appropriate guidelines. When probing occurred at all during interviews with area or department chairpersons, it was typically done with leading questions such as: "Of course, you are familiar with the guidelines of the professional associations in this area?" Affirmative answers were not followed up with additional questions or even requests to see the guidelines.6

Student Participation in Program Evaluation and Development, component 2.5 of the Curricula family, requires the following:

As members of the college community, prospective teachers have the opportunity and responsibility to express their views regarding the improvement of teacher education programs. Through student organizations, through joint student-faculty groups, and/or through membership on faculty committees, students have clear channels and frequent opportunities to express their views with the assurance that their proposals will influence the modification of the teacher education programs offered by the institution. Participation is encouraged by serious consideration of student input. This participation does not imply that students will make decisions as a single group, but as a part of the larger decision-making process.

The institution makes provisions for representative student participation in the decision-making phases related to the design, approval, evaluation, and modification of its teacher education programs.

One team judged that this Standard was met because students could serve on committees and could observe faculty meetings. Yet one committee (the Curricula Committee) had no student members and had not met that year; further, no evidence could be found that students had observed any faculty meetings that year. Interviews revealed
that students were unaware of such opportunities and generally resented their lack of involvement in department and institutional decision-making.\textsuperscript{8}

Conditions for Faculty Development, a component of the Faculty family of Standards, requires an institution to:

- Have a plan for faculty development to provide for inservice education, sabbatical leave, travel support, summer leaves, intra- and inter-institutional visitation and fellowships. Such a plan also must include opportunities for developing and implementing innovations in multicultural education and for developing new areas of expertise;

- Ensure that the load of a faculty member is such that scholarly and professional development can be continued; and

- Provide for support services (e.g., instructional media technicians, laboratory and/or instructional assistants, research assistants, secretaries, and clerks).\textsuperscript{9}

On one visit, the team found that the institution had earmarked $18,000 for faculty development but had no plan for allocating the funds. Support services were marginal. Moreover, faculty members had heavy teaching loads. In addition, some faculty members taught additional courses at the graduate level, for which they received compensation. Nevertheless, the institution was found to be meeting the Standard.\textsuperscript{10}

Standard 6.1 requires institutions to evaluate systematically the quality of their graduates after they have entered the teaching profession. Data are to be used to modify and improve the institution's teacher education programs (the Evaluation and Planning family of Standards).
Several teams observed during this study failed to find evidence of any systematic evaluation of graduates or anything more than plans to plan long-range efforts. Consequently, in each case these Standards were judged not met. One team reported its findings in the following way:

The *Institutional Report* (Volume 1, pp. 199-212) is complete and accurate as far as it goes. It is important to note that there is no comprehensive and systematic evaluation plan to assess graduates after they enter the profession, and no such evaluation effort has been undertaken since 1977. Some faculty appear to keep informed about program evaluation developments, and a workshop on evaluation is scheduled for next spring....

**Weakness**

The institution does not systematically evaluate its graduates after they enter the teaching profession, and thus there are no data from such an evaluation to modify and improve programs.

**TEAM CONSENSUS**

The team concludes that **STANDARD 6.1 is NOT MET.**

More such examples, for every family of Standards, could be presented, but the point is clear: When the presence-or-absence approach was used, merely the existence of a claim that a task or function was being performed was sufficient to judge that a Standard had been met. Only when performance was absent or woefully inadequate was a Standard judged not met.
2. Examples of the In-Depth Approach Among Visiting Teams

When a Visiting Team adopts an in-depth approach, it makes judgments about how well a task or function is performed, operationalizes and applies quality indicators for nearly all requirements of a Standard, and collects and judges evidence across Standards. The application of an in-depth approach requires greater penetration by team members into the actual operation of a program. Thus, typically, interviews are cross-checked with other persons in the program (faculty, students, and practitioners in the field), documents are reviewed at length, site visits focus on specific areas of concern, and institutional resources are examined from the perspective of specific specialties.

Two examples, one drawn from a team that took an in-depth approach most of the time and one from a team that took primarily a presence-or-absence approach, are presented.

As noted earlier, the practicum subcomponent of the Professional Studies component of the Curricula family requires "...direct, substantial, quality participation in teaching over an extended period of time..." under the supervision of well-qualified college and school personnel. One team raised serious questions about the effect on the practicum experience of the state-mandated Teacher Center, which required local universities to pool their efforts to provide field experience. Initial concern surfaced as the result of questions from one team member to faculty members about the philosophies of teaching students learned in their methods courses. According to faculty members (and corroborated later through interviews with students), the
problem was not that students failed to learn different approaches, but rather that they lacked the opportunity to try out these different philosophies. One professor stated the problem in blunt terms:

Student teachers have to teach the way the classroom teacher wants, not the way they want to teach. We have experienced a lot of conflict over this. I tell my students I can only back them up to a certain point. The school district doesn't have to take our students, so in the final analysis, they have to do what the classroom teacher says.

The students come up in the traditional system, spend two years in the teacher education program with us, and then go back out into the traditional system to practice teach. That creates problems for the students and for us.13

Another professor described her solution to the problem thusly:

I tell my students "You may not be able to practice your philosophy now, but you can make changes when you get your own classroom."14

These concerns were discussed with other team members and heightened by findings of a meeting with students where team members learned of consequences that could flow from such practice. One student reported:

When I started my practicum in Physical Education, I saw the teacher had the kids running around the gym for 20 minutes. I asked to teach a unit on aerobic dance and he agreed. He said I could do it for 6 weeks. I have done it for 4 weeks now and today, when he came back to the classroom, he said he didn't like what he saw and would finish out the last 2 weeks.15

Team members then spent considerable time examining the operation of the Teacher Center. They learned that the Center exercised dominant control over the placement of students for their field
experience (practicum as well as aide work), the application of criteria for supervising teachers, and the selection and training of supervising teachers. They learned that supervising teachers had the major responsibility for evaluating the progress of students. Except for a mid-term and final form sheet, the classroom teacher was free to decide what feedback to give the student and when.

Team members found inconsistent performance in each area. School representatives to the Center had some influence over placement of students, but the "round-robin" method for placement, in which each institution, working with Teacher Center staff, placed students in turn, was effective only to the point of allowing an institution to influence the placement of a student teacher at the right grade level in a particular school, not with a particular teacher. (Institutions did have the right, however, to veto teachers.) Criteria for supervising teachers were found to be elastic, with principals and central office staff often influencing the selection of supervising teachers. Some teachers had never had instruction in how to supervise a student teacher, in spite of Teacher Center requirements that all teachers attend annual workshops on this responsibility. Finally, the team found widely varying practices with respect to feedback to student teachers on their performance.

It should be noted that in each area evidence that suggested minimal performance was found. But the team found, on the whole, that the practices of the Teacher Center seriously detracted from the ability of the schools to provide a quality practicum experience, as judged by
all the requirements in this Standard. When team members learned that there were additional problems regarding the number of visits school personnel personally made to review student progress and that some students were taking courses in addition to full-time practicum responsibilities, they decided to declare the practicum Standard not met. In so doing, the team also listed concerns or weaknesses in other areas of Standards affected by the practices of the Teacher Center (e.g., Governance and Evaluation and Planning). 

In short, the team operationalized and applied quality indicators, weighed conflicting evidence, related one Standard to another, and made judgments about how well the task of providing a practicum experience was being performed.

A second illustration shows how this process works with the Competence and Utilization of Faculty component (3.1) of the Faculty family. Among other things, this Standard requires that faculty competence be demonstrated through "...academic preparation, experience, teaching and scholarly performance." Minimum requirements include advanced degree work in a well-defined field of specialization. If requisite advanced work has not been completed, "...competence may be established on the basis of scholarly performance as reflected by publication, research, and/or recognition by professional peers in the faculty member's field of specialization." In addition, the institution must assign faculty members to areas "which make possible the maximum use of preparation and experience..." The Standard further discourages "...the use of faculty in areas in which

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they are not competent.\textsuperscript{21}

After extensive review of faculty vitae and interviews with faculty and the department chairperson, one team member argued that the faculty person responsible for teaching in the area of learning disability did not meet the Standard. While held in high regard by her peers, her master's degree was in the area of emotionally impaired. She had done no scholarly research in the area of learning disability, and team interviews led to the conclusion that her knowledge of learning disability content and theory was weak. The team debated these findings at some length and, while agreeing the Standard had been met, approved the following weakness:

Even while carefully considering her teaching performance, community involvement, and the respect of her peers, it was felt that these strengths were not sufficient to satisfy the requirements, nor could they overcome the weaknesses in the areas of publication, research, and appropriate academic preparation.\textsuperscript{22}

3. \textbf{Examples of Audit Committee and Council Use of Presence-or-Absence and In-Depth Approaches}

The presence-or-absence approach prevails in almost every Audit Committee. But, just as all teams look at some Standards in depth, most Audit Committees examine at least one program from one institution in depth (each Audit Committee reviews four to five institutions, each of which has presented four to nineteen programs for accreditation). Audit Committees that examine in depth most programs from most institutions stand out as marked exceptions to this general pattern.

The prevailing pattern for an Audit Committee is to review
Standards found not met, first at the basic and then at the advanced level. Members review the institution's response to such findings and, possibly, the original Institutional Report and then make decisions. Generally, decisions follow the recommendations of the Visiting Team; however, when an Institutional Rejoinder provides conflicting information, the Audit Committee may decide to reverse the team's findings. After reviewing problem areas identified by the team, the committee may discuss specific weaknesses of special concern to individual committee members. It is rare that such weaknesses are judged so serious that the Standard is deemed not met when the team has found it met. The next step is to decide whether to accredit or deny the program. After this process has been completed for all programs at the basic degree level, the committee moves on to examine programs at the advanced degree level.

Decisions on accreditation generally reflect a presence-or-absence approach: Audit Committees look to see if a task or function is performed at all (i.e., is in place and operates with a minimum degree of effectiveness), then count the number of Standards not met and recommend accreditation or denial depending on that figure. Accreditation is usually recommended unless at least four or more Standards are found not met and additional weaknesses exist in other areas.

When the in-depth approach prevails in the analysis of a program, a different dynamic takes place. The Audit Committee spends a great deal of time examining the program, discussing requirements in each part of many Standards, and relating findings from one Standard to another. In such cases, a program may fail as few as two Standards and be recommended for denial, provided the Audit Committee has found additional weaknesses in
other areas. When the committee decides to recommend denial, extensive discussion ensues during Council deliberation; the committee chairperson presents the team's findings, notes any areas the team failed to probe, and reports its conclusions and the rationale behind its recommendation to deny accreditation. For example, one Audit Committee member reported the following:

The Standards we found as not met were the result of our digging into all the evidence. For example, the team report approved the program in the following areas, but we came to different conclusions:

1. **Governance:** The team listed four strengths, but we determined that the institution did not meet the Standard;

2. **Design of Curricula:** The team felt the program was adequate, but we could find no evidence to support this in either the team report or the Institutional Report, so we determined that the Standard had not been met;

3. **Conditions for Faculty Development:** The team focused on the adequacy of the secretarial services. We considered that, but the most important requirements deal with faculty, and we could not find conditions that directly supported their growth, so we determined that the Standard had not been met.

4. **Admission to Basic Programs:** The component requires more than just a minimum grade point average, but that's all we found.

5. **Use of Guidelines Developed by National Learned Societies and Professional Associations (in developing a curriculum):** The team cited a strength in an area that we felt was not relevant to the requirements of this component. Furthermore, after reviewing the Institutional Report and other materials, we could find no information on how guidelines from professional associations might have been used in the design of their special methods courses. Thus, we determined that the Standard had not been met.\footnote{33}

A second Audit Committee followed a similar procedure in
recommending denial of accreditation. Prior to presenting the Audit Committee's findings, the chairperson noted:

> The visiting team report was not positive, but it did say all the Standards were met. The problem is that the report failed to cover several areas of the program in depth. Either the team didn't read the Standards carefully or didn't understand them. Some things were listed as a strength that had no relevance to a Standard. Thus, the weaknesses I'm going to present were not cited by the team but were developed by the Audit Committee.²

In both cases, considerable discussion followed the Audit Committees' recommendations to deny accreditation. In both cases, accreditation was denied.

Having illustrated these two approaches, a word of caution is in order. While in-depth penetration of a particular Standard or program generally leads to a judgment that a Standard has not been met or a recommendation that the program be denied accreditation, such is not always the case; Standards may still be found to be met, but with an extensive list of weaknesses. In some cases, in-depth evaluation may even lead to a positive assessment. This happened for specific Standards on two teams.

Nor does the presence-or-absence approach always lead to a recommendation that the Standard has been met or that the program should be accredited. As the examples show, when a task or function is not performed at all, or performance is clearly inadequate, the team judges the Standard not met. Generally, when at least four or more Standards are found to be not met, and a number of additional weaknesses exist, Audit Committees, using the accounting procedure of tallying the number not met, recommend the program be denied accreditation.
However, the general effect of each approach is clear: negative findings tend to result from the use of the in-depth approach, whereas the presence-or-absence approach tends to yield neutral or positive findings.

Such a finding is not unexpected: the more one probes, the more one is likely to find the limits of performance.

Why does the presence-or-absence approach prevail at every level of the accrediting process? It is now appropriate to answer this question.
Philosophy and procedures explain the dominance of the presence-or-absence approach at every level of the NCATE accreditation process. It is a cornerstone of organizational theory that administrative action often has unintended consequences. Well-conceived procedures often result in practices at variance with an organization's stated goals. This chapter describes how numerous procedures, many well conceived, produce unintended consequences that move NCATE Visiting Teams, Audit Committees, and Council members in a presence-or-absence direction.

To portray NCATE participants simply as prisoners of procedure would be incorrect, however, for in fact they also shape and implement those requirements. They are to some degree autonomous. In other words, the participants' respective philosophies affect how they define their mission and, in turn, how they go about their tasks.

This raises an interesting possibility. Perhaps those in positions of power in NCATE have simply structured the process so a presence-or-absence approach prevails. The possibility of showing that to be the case rests on the assumption that such a group can be identified, the members' views documented, and their influence over procedures demonstrated. No evidence of such a group was found, however. Instead, adherents of both the presence-or-absence and in-depth approaches were found—
so too was a large group of participants at the Council and team levels who could be persuaded to use one approach or the other, depending on the issue or the circumstance. While participants who consciously followed their philosophies influenced the use of certain procedures and thus contributed to the dominance of one approach or the other, even more significant was the effect procedures had in determining which approach prevailed.

It is at the Council/Audit Committee level that the philosophies are most clearly expressed. The dialogue quoted in the Introduction to this part neatly illustrates this point. Debates during Council deliberations, when they occur, often reflect the two approaches. But it would be impossible to show that adherents of the presence-or-absence approach always prevail, for they do not. Instead, they receive a boost from procedures that encourage the use of such an approach. At the team level, the picture becomes even more cloudy. Some team chairpersons clearly support a presence-or-absence approach in both word and deed. Others do not. Some even support an in-depth approach but are overwhelmed by the consequences of certain procedures. Teams have the fewest proponents of one philosophy or the other. Members simply approach their tasks with the idea of doing the best job they can. In some cases, it leads to pursuit of an in-depth approach; in most, it leads to a presence-or-absence approach.

The thesis of this chapter, then, is that while Visiting Team, Audit Committee, and Council members enjoy some autonomy in shaping the approach they will use and influencing which approach will prevail,
they are fundamentally constrained by the numerous unintended consequences that result from following different procedures. The "mobilization of bias" in favor of the presence-or-absence approach permeates the organization from the lowest to the highest levels, but to understand its roots one must analyze the procedures and their consequences, and only secondarily the competing philosophies.

An analysis of procedures requires examination of the Standards as written, NCATE work conditions, the resources available to institutions, and the dynamics of team visits, Audit Committee meetings, the Council deliberations—for it is in these four areas that unintended consequences occur.

1. Characteristics of the Standards

Chapter 1 demonstrated that the Standards call for a high level of performance. In part, this is reflected in the numerous requirements that are a part of every Standard. But it is one thing to require a great deal—and another to state the requirements clearly. The first problem with the Standards is their lack of clarity.

A. Vague Wording

Important parts of every Standard are vaguely worded. Numerous phrases in every requirement need further definition, elaboration, and explication if institutions are to know the level of performance expected and team members are to evaluate programs according to that level.

Standard 2.1, Design of Curriculum, illustrates this point. The relevant requirement reads:

Teacher education curricula are based on explicit objectives that reflect the institution's conception
of the teacher's role. There is a direct and obvious relationship between those objectives and the components of the curriculum. [Emphasis added]

While the entire Standard requires an institution to demonstrate it has thought through its program, a team member evaluating this requirement is left in a quandry over how to evaluate the evidence that the institution has done so. What does "explicit" mean? Written? Clearly stated? Stated in behavioral terms? Is it sufficient that the department chairperson can show how course offerings are related to roles students are expected to fill upon graduation, or should each instructor be expected to do so with his/her course?

The Governance Standard provides another example. It requires:

The design, approval, and continuous evaluation and development of teacher education programs are the primary responsibility of an officially designated unit. The membership of this unit is composed of faculty and/or staff who have professional and scholarly preparation; a majority of the membership of this unit are experienced in elementary or secondary teaching and have continuing experience in elementary or secondary schools, are significantly involved and well informed about the preparation of teachers and the problems of the schools and have experience in, and commitment to, the task of educating teachers who will provide instruction in a multicultural society. [Emphasis added]

At one level, while the Governance Standard requires that a "unit" be responsible for education programs, it does not specify any particular organizational structure for the unit, allowing such forms as a council, commission, committee, department, school, college, "or other recognizable organizational entity." The Standard does require, however, that the unit have "primary responsibility" for the "design, approval, and continuous evaluation and development of teacher education
programs.\textsuperscript{6} At this level, team and Council members must make a number of judgments. Two are useful to point out, since they represent actual problems NCATE teams have had to resolve. First, what does "primary responsibility" mean? At a state university with many separate schools is the requirement for "primary responsibility" met if the School of Education (the unit) responds to curricula initiatives in educational offerings by departments in other schools? Or must the School of Education be involved in initial design as well as approval?\textsuperscript{7} At a liberal arts college with only departments, are the departments required to send proposals for education course offerings to the Department of Education for formal approval before presenting them to a curriculum committee? Or is informal consultation between the two sufficient?

Similarly, the Governance Standard specifies that the "unit" be composed of faculty and staff. But how are the characteristics required of these "unit" members—that they have "professional and scholarly preparation" and "continuing experience," be "significantly involved" and "well informed" with "commitment to" the task—to be defined?

A component of the Evaluation and Planning "family" also illustrates the problem of vagueness. It requires that:

The institution keeps abreast of emerging evaluation techniques and engages in systematic efforts to evaluate the quality of its graduates....

[Emphasis added]\textsuperscript{8}

How should an institution demonstrate that it "keeps abreast"?

Attendance at conferences and workshops where such issues are discussed?
Departmental discussion? Individual study? What kind of "emerging evaluation techniques" would be relevant? Finally, while it would be relatively easy to determine whether an institution has ever followed up on its graduates to learn what they think of the institution's program after some work experience, some guidance is needed if one is to judge whether the process is "systematic." Is once every five years "systematic"? If an institution just started evaluation last year, is that "systematic"? If an institution has plans for such an evaluation, is that "systematic"?

While examples of such vague quality indicators could be taken from every Standard, the point is clear: The Standards require not only that a function or task be performed, but also that the function or task be performed so as to maximize the quality of the teacher education program at that institution. But they provide little guidance as to whether a program has done "enough" to merit approval.

B. Confusing Organization

The second major problem with the Standards as written is their very organization. Each component of every family of Standards consists of a "Preamble" and an italicized portion termed the "Standard." The Preamble provides the background for what is expected and the Standard summarizes the requirements. The general introduction to the Standards states, however, that "the Preamble...is to be interpreted as part of the Standard which it precedes." The Council's intent (as staff members make clear at briefings for institutions and at training sessions for prospective team members and current team chairpersons) is that requirements in both the Preamble and the Standard be examined and judgments
made on whether a Standard is met or a program is accreditable on the basis of performance in all the requirements in both parts.

This guidance is important because the italicized summaries consistently focus on the essence of the requirement—that a task of function exist—whereas the Preamble consistently describes the numerous qualities the task or function must display. The summaries, in short, often lack the quality indicators.

While examples that illustrate this point could be taken from every component, one will suffice. The Materials and Instructional Media Center component of the Resources family requires the existence of a modern media and materials center and instruction in how to use such technologies. The Preamble reads as follows:

Modern media and materials are essential elements in the communications system of contemporary society. For this reason, teachers need to understand the technologies that make such media and materials usable in their teaching and need to possess skills in using them. As a means to assist prospective teachers in developing these understandings and skills, the institution makes available and accessible to students and faculty members appropriate teaching-learning materials and instructional media that reflect cultural diversity in American society. A program for the preparation of teachers includes the use of teaching-learning materials and instructional media in two important ways: prospective teachers are instructed in how to devise and use modern technologies in their teaching, and modern technologies are utilized by the faculty in teaching students.

In maintaining and developing the collection of such materials and media, the institution gives serious consideration to the recommendations of faculty members and appropriate national professional organizations. [Emphasis added]\(^\text{10}\)

As the emphasized parts show, it is not enough simply to have a media and materials center; faculty must use modern technologies in
their teaching and instruct their students in how to use them in their own teaching. Yet the italicized part of the Standard emphasizes only the existence of a media and materials center:

Standard: A materials and instructional media center for teacher education is maintained either as a part of the library, or as one or more separate units, and supports the teacher education program.11

When the summaries do contain quality indicators, those applying the indicators must go back to the Preambles to discern their general intent ("general intent" because even the Preambles fail to provide clear direction, as noted earlier). The Practicum subcomponent of the Curricula family illustrates this point. The summary states:

Standard: The professional studies component of each curriculum for prospective teachers includes direct, substantial, quality participation in teaching over an extended period of time in an elementary or secondary school. This practicum should be under the supervision of college personnel who are experienced in, and have continuing experience with, elementary or secondary teaching, and certificated, experienced personnel from the cooperating school. Explicit criteria are established and applied for the selection of school supervisors and for the assignment of college personnel. [Emphasis added]12

Unless team and Council members go back to the Preamble, they have only their own judgment as guidance in determining what constitutes "...direct, substantial, quality participation in teaching over an extended period of time..."13 Even if they do go back to the Preamble, these terms still call out for further explication.

C. Failed Efforts to Clarify Standards

NCATE recognizes that its Standards are vague at key points and has taken several steps to improve the situation by developing a
set of evidence questions, distributing a team training manual, and conducting training sessions for team members. These efforts have fallen short of their goal, as the following discussion shows.

Since 1964, NCATE has published explanatory information (either appended to the Standards or separately) about the requirements of each Standard. In 1979, NCATE's Council approved dissemination on a trial basis of its most comprehensive efforts to date, a set of evidence questions. These questions are intended to be used by institutions in writing Institutional Reports, by Visiting Teams during on-site evaluations, and by Council members during deliberations about accreditation. It is expected that the evidence questions will eventually replace the questions now appearing in an appendix to the Standards.

These evidence questions do little to clarify the requirements of the Standards. They neither define the "quality indicators" nor suggest what evidence would be sufficient to demonstrate that Standards have been met. Instead, they often simply restate the vague phrase in question form—or require institutions to define the phrase. For example, suggested questions for evaluating performance in the area of Governance include the following:

- What evidence shows that the majority of the membership of the official unit is comprised of faculty and/or staff members who are experienced in elementary or secondary teaching, who are significantly involved and well-informed about the preparation of teachers and the problems of the schools, and who have professional and scholarly preparation?

- How does the institution define what constitutes "professional and scholarly preparation"?
Some of the evidence questions simply ignore the vagueness problem by omitting the vague words of the Standard. For example, the Standard for Faculty Involvement with the Schools requires, in part, that the institution ensure that teacher education faculty have "continuing association" and involvement with elementary and secondary school personnel, including "meaningful involvement" with the public schools.\textsuperscript{17} The corresponding evidence questions, however, suggest that institutions can avoid any concern about "continuing association" or "meaningful involvement" by simply showing that they have ".\textellipsis a planned program of faculty involvement with the schools."\textsuperscript{18}

Participants in NCATE training sessions for prospective team members are given a training manual developed by an NCATE Council member. The manual is also sent to every person selected to participate on an NCATE Visiting Team.

In this manual, key phrases or words, the indicators of quality, are neither defined nor clarified. For example, in the area of Governance the team member is instructed to examine the minutes of "unit" meetings to determine:

\begin{quote}
...the unit's role in the design, approval and continuous evaluation of teacher education programs. There should be explicit examples of each of these three functions.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

Throughout its history, NCATE has provided training for chairpersons of Visiting Teams. At present, approximately one-third of the sixty to seventy people who annually chair NCATE teams attend a day and a half workshop to update their skills. Every effort is made to include all new chairpersons; the remaining places are filled by experienced team
chairpersons who attend the sessions on the average of once every three years. 20

Such a workshop provides an important opportunity for NCATE staff to clarify the Standards for both new and experienced chairpersons, to ensure consistency of application. Observation of the 1979 training session suggest that this opportunity is not fully explored. All but two time slots were devoted to discussion of procedural issues (allocation of tasks, finding adequate hotel accommodations for the team, etc.), an update on NCATE activity, or a description of the decision-making process in NCATE. The two slots allocated for discussion of the Standards came immediately after dinner on the first day and early in the morning on the second. A heavy dinner and the resulting late starting hour of that session led to its early demise. The NCATE staff person abbreviated her lecture on the Standards and began again the next morning, immediately after breakfast. In both instances, the need to move on to other subjects precluded any meaningful discussion or interaction. 21 Interviews with participants showed this aspect of the session to be the part most in need of improvement. 22

Since 1974 NCATE has conducted a training program for potential Visiting Team members. In fact, successful completion of a training session is an NCATE staff and constituent group requirement for selection to an NCATE team. Every year NCATE staff run eight to twelve workshops for twenty to seventy participants each. Constituent organizations sponsor the sessions reimbursing participants for their expenses and defraying the costs of NCATE's staff participation. The content is exclusively under the
control of NCATE headquarter staff to ensure that the same material is covered at each session. 23

Training sessions last for two days (evening, full day, and morning spread over a Thursday, Friday, and Saturday). Attention is given to NCATE's history, functions, and procedures. The Standards are presented (typically, paraphrased) in a "lecture" and team member responsibilities are discussed. The greatest emphasis, however, is placed on a practical application of the Standards through a mock team visit to a campus. This provides participants with a "hands-on" experience similar to what occurs during an actual team visit.

Given the press of time to prepare for and carry out the mock visit, only a cursory discussion of the Standards is provided. Quality indicators are not defined, and the lecture format precludes any substantive discussion by participants. 24

In sum, while NCATE recognizes the vagueness of its Standards and attempts to clarify them by providing information and opportunities for discussion, these efforts fail to provide the substance needed for consistent in-depth application.

2. NCATE Work Conditions

The vagueness of the requirements, including their organization into Preambles and summarized Standards that omit many requirements, set the stage for use of a presence-or-absence approach, under certain conditions. These conditions exist.
A. Lack of Time

As one Council member with years of experience in NCATE put it during a break in a meeting of the Standards Committee:

You know what the most critical element of the NCATE evaluation process is? Time. The visiting teams, the Standards Committee, and the Council never have enough time to do all we have to do.25

Visiting Team members have only two days to complete their assignments. Typically, team members arrive in the late afternoon on Sunday. Actual evaluation is carried out during the day on Monday and Tuesday, with evenings reserved for team discussion of findings and team consensus sessions. On Wednesday, the team prepares and presents its major findings to the institution in an Exit Report.

The Council meets three times a year for three and a half days each time. One day is usually reserved for committee meetings; an afternoon and evening is used for Audit Committee review of documents and the development of recommendations; and a day and a half are spent on Council deliberations, including discussions of committee reports and old and new business.

B. Lack of People

The average size of an NCATE team is ten. Given the tasks to be performed and the time constraints, it is questionable whether the team has enough resources to do the job.

The size of a particular team is directly related to the number of programs an institution presents for accreditation. When school personnel programs in administration, guidance, or counseling as well as basic (i.e., undergraduate) and advanced (i.e., graduate) teacher education programs are to be evaluated, the number of team members may go as
high as twelve. With smaller schools with few programs, the number may drop to only eight.\textsuperscript{26}

C. Large Number of Programs to be Evaluated

With little time and limited numbers, the task of evaluation becomes even more difficult, given the number of programs institutions submit for accreditation. Typically, they present all their programs. For a small institution, this normally means four programs: elementary education, secondary education, special education, and K-12. Larger institutions present, in addition, numerous programs at various degree levels, including reading, school psychology and counseling, and educational administration. Totals for such large institutions may run between fifteen and nineteen programs, not counting degree levels.

At each of the March and June Council meetings, forty to forty-five institutions will present programs for accreditation. Each Audit Committee will have responsibility for four or five institutions, for a total of forty to sixty programs, not counting degree levels.

Given the depth of evaluation required by NCATE, the press of time, the number of programs to evaluate, and the number of people to do the evaluating, the preconditions exist for participants to avoid operationalizing the vague quality indicators and concentrate instead on the summaries of the Standards, where the requirements are fewer and more straightforward. And this is what happens.

Before looking at how it happens, it is necessary to examine a set of procedures institutions follow that have the unintended consequences of encouraging teams and Audit Committees to use a presence-or-absence approach when they evaluate programs.
3. **Institutional Prerogatives**

For the NCATE accreditation process to work, institutional involvement is necessary during many phases of the process. In some cases, unintended consequences result from otherwise well-conceived procedures, with the result that use of the presence-or-absence approach is encouraged.

Institutions have a right to veto proposed team chairpersons and team members. They also provide initial information on programs to teams, influence the amount of information available to team members once they are on campus, and affect the kind of information available to team members by their selection of students and supervising teachers to be interviewed and schools to be visited. Furthermore, they affect the kind of information available to Audit Committees and Council members who review their programs. Finally, they influence the opportunity of team members and chairpersons to participate on future NCATE teams.

A. **Institutions Have a Right to Veto Prospective Team Chairpersons and Individual Team Members**

The best justification for this practice, according to an NCATE official with long experience in the organization, is that:

> Inherent in the concept of voluntary accreditation is the right of the institution to participate in the selection of those who evaluate their programs, at least to the extent of vetoing nominees.²⁷

This "right" is circumscribed by several conditions: (1) NCATE staff suggest prospective members, while institutions can only respond; (2) the final team must be composed of equal numbers from higher education and K-12, plus one student; (3) minority representation must exist at a level appropriate to the institution being visited; and (4) institutions are encouraged to veto nominees only on the basis of NCATE's Guidelines for Ethical Practices.²⁸
When schools use this veto right, it is generally confined to team chairpersons. According to NCATE procedures, an institution is informed of the schools where the nominee recently chaired a team or participated as a team member. The institution is told it can contact officials at that school to learn of the nominee's performance—and it frequently does.28

During the school year 1979-80, twenty institutions out of sixty-eight visited by NCATE teams rejected nominees. Moreover, more than half the time institutions rejected several candidates (one school rejected five before agreeing to a selection).30

When schools reject potential team chairpersons, they generally do so on the basis of a conflict with NCATE's Guidelines for Ethical Practices. But they also do so in hopes of finding one that better "understands" their particular circumstances.31 For example, institutions shy away from selecting practitioners (only 14 percent of the 1979 teams were chaired by practitioners; in addition, practitioners were rejected in nine of the twenty cases in which institutions vetoed NCATE's nominee).32 Small schools sometimes reject nominees on the grounds that they do not want someone from a large school evaluating their programs. But, most significantly for this study, institutions also reject nominees on the basis of their past performance, as defined by the institution where the person previously served as team member or chairperson.

Previously visited institutions where many weaknesses have been found may give negative recommendations to the institution about to undergo accreditation. This causes officials to think long and hard about the nominee. For the eight teams observed for this study, two institutions
vetoed nominees. Through interviews with officials at the institutions and at NCATE headquarters it was learned that the vetoes were related to past visits where nominees found many weaknesses in the programs.

This creates considerable frustration for the person at NCATE headquarters responsible for building teams. He described the situation for a nominee to one of the schools in the following way:

She chaired the team at ________ (an institution) that was later denied. The institution gave her a devastating assessment after the visit. But I thought the team did a good job and the institution deserved to be denied.

I have tried on two other occasions to get her selected as a team chair [in addition to the one institution observed for this study that vetoed her nomination] but have had no success.\(^{33}\)

Institutions also reject nominees for team members, and this is also related to the depth by which they wish their programs evaluated. A representative from an institution accredited by NCATE during the period of this research, but not observed during the team visit, was quite open about his motives in this regard:

We saw NCATE as a problem to get over with in the least costly way. The faculty in our College of Education was hostile to NCATE, so we decided to keep the process as quiet as possible. Only the department chairperson and I knew it was coming up. I wrote the entire Institutional Report to cover over our problems. Then we tried to get faculty members who might cause trouble out of town during the visit and we primed the others. We deliberately pushed for a small NCATE team on the assumption, they would not be able to penetrate deeply because they would run out of time. [The programs at this institution were accredited. Emphasis added.]\(^{34}\)
While such a blatant effort to influence the direction of a team no doubt represents an exception, and while most institutions, even if they do check on the past performance of a team chairperson, approve NCATE's nominee, the fact remains that institutions have the opportunity to influence the direction a team will take and that some avail themselves of that opportunity.

B. Institutions Sometimes Present Incomplete Institutional Reports

The quote in the previous section shows how this can be done in a conscious manner. For teams observed for this research, no institutional representatives admitted to such tactics. Nevertheless, three Institutional Reports (of the eight) were so poor in quality that they had the same effect: the team spent the entire time reconstructing what the programs were instead of probing their quality in depth.

The function of the Visiting Team is to verify what is said in the Institutional Report, to determine strengths and weaknesses in the program by an application of the Standards, and to determine whether the program meets the requirements of each Standard. The ability of a team to carry out this function is directly related to the completeness of the Institutional Report. When Standards are addressed in detail, team members are able to verify and validate and they have opportunities to probe in depth and relate one Standard to another. But when the information is sketchy or nonexistent, team members must generate information to fill in the holes. Given time constraints of a visit, it is difficult to do more than see if a task or function is performed at all.
Institutional Reports usually are lengthy documents, often running several hundred pages of text and including separate volumes on specific programs and faculty qualifications. The report of one of the eight institutions involved in this research, however, totaled only twenty-seven pages of text and omitted any discussion of two families of Standards: Resources and Evaluation and Planning. Two other reports neglected to provide information on specific programs. On all three teams, members spent time interviewing faculty and staff to learn what was being done in these areas, instead of how well it was being done.

One chairperson described the consequences in the following way:

This was the worst Institutional Report I have ever dealt with. When we have to flesh out the IR, it affects an awful lot of what we do. Basically, we just can't get into the program. We can't give adequate attention to checking documents. People are so concerned about their own responsibilities they can't help each other out. The opportunity to get a total perspective is diminished to the point where I think judgments are made that are not as sound as they should be. There is more uncertainty about the findings. And you should know there are a hell of a lot of people on this team who are frustrated by this whole experience.

Why Institutional Reports are incomplete is a question that requires a complicated answer, since it relates in part to the process institutions use to develop those reports and the seriousness with which they view the process. Both these points are treated in detail in Part III of this report, where the effect of NCATE accreditation on the quality of teacher education is discussed. But there are two additional reasons which can be discussed at this point: institutions do
not follow NCATE guidelines on what the Institutional Report is to include, and NCATE allows visits to proceed with incomplete Institutional Reports.

The Council directs institutions to:

...follow the format of the "Standards for the accreditation of teacher education" (STDS.). The content of the IR shall be in response to the meaning and expectations found in the Standard (Preambles and the Standards). The IR shall be written Standard by Standard with reference to program particulars for those Standards where appropriate.

The Council also requires some preliminary or introductory information related to scope, eligibility, NCATE accreditation history, overview, etc. 36

The guide for institutions also provides a sample outline, information on how different Standards might be addressed, a sample scope sheet, and a sample vitae sheet for faculty members. All three institutions that submitted poor reports did not follow these instructions.

The second reason for widely varying quality among Institutional Reports is the absence of any enforcement procedure at NCATE headquarters to discourage such practices. All Institutional Reports, regardless of completeness, are accepted for review by NCATE teams.

The result of incomplete Institutional Reports is that some teams are pushed to a presence-or-absence approach whether they like it or not. While five of the eight institutions involved in this research submitted adequate reports, the large number of incomplete reports suggests that the problem is a significant one. So, too, do interviews with staff at NCATE headquarters and observations at Council meetings,
where the quality of Institutional Reports was often a subject of discussion.\textsuperscript{37}

C. Institutions Also Influence the Amount of Information Available to Team Members Once They are On Campus

State visits, held in conjunction with NCATE visits, have the potential, unless carefully planned and coordinated, for limiting the availability of certain faculty, administrators, and other personnel. On one team where such planning did not occur, NCATE team members had to wait numerous times to see particular individuals. Joint meetings were scheduled with students doing their practice teaching and with practitioners supervising the students. Confusion over who should go first and the need for each team to share time with the other reduced the opportunity to ask certain questions and to probe others.\textsuperscript{38}

On another visit, the team arrived only to learn that the Board of Trustees had scheduled an all-day meeting for Monday that would tie up all senior administrative staff. This meant that initial attempts to evaluate the Governance and Evaluation and Planning families had to be confined in large part to the second day of the visit.\textsuperscript{39}

Since time is of the essence, when joint visits end up competing for time and university meetings are scheduled on days when the team is on campus, the team's ability to probe in depth is limited. For the teams mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the prevailing approach was to see if a task or function was performed at all.

Institutions also arrange meetings for team members to visit with faculty and administrators responsible for different parts of the program. Such meetings are necessary if team members are to make contact
with as many sources as time allows. But in some cases, such meetings tied up the entire team for long periods in what might best be described as "dog-and-pony shows." At one institution where team members were responsible for evaluating fifteen programs, most with numerous degree levels, the institution first scheduled an orientation session (for an hour and a half) and then a presentation by the dean (for two hours) where the history of the institution was presented and the general virtues of the institution extolled. In other cases, large group meetings with numerous staff or students inhibited give-and-take. Given the number of people in attendance, team members had little opportunity to probe areas in depth because topics under discussion changed so rapidly.

D. Institutions Influence the Kind of Information Available to Team Members by Selecting the Students and Supervising Teachers to be Interviewed by NCATE Members and the Schools to be Visited

During some visits, team members went off on their own to talk with additional students. In some cases, a whole class was asked to stay to talk with team members. And in some cases, team members specified the type of school they would like to visit and were given a choice. All three activities increased the likelihood that a wide range of views would be heard. Such activities notwithstanding, the prevailing pattern for each visit was for the institution to assume responsibility for selecting students and schools. While it would be difficult to establish that only supporters of the program were picked, the potential for such bias is present whenever random selection by the evaluator is not an option.
E. Institution's Affect Information Audit Committees Have at Their Disposal

According to NCATE procedures, an institution must file a rejoinder to the Visiting Team Report prior to the Council meeting that considers its programs for accreditation. Without such a rejoinder, no action can be taken. This policy has the advantage of providing the Council with more complete information on which to base a decision to accredit or deny an institution's programs. It also provides maximum opportunity for the institution to clarify and correct findings it believes to be in error. However, research for this project also found it may have the unintended consequence of biasing Audit Committee members in favor of the institution when facts and interpretations are in dispute.

Some institutions simply acknowledge the teams' findings in short, one-page rejoinders, but most dispute one or more findings and occasionally file rejoinders longer than the team reports themselves.

Through interviews with representatives at institutions involved in this study, it was learned that institutions felt the rejoinder was an important part of due process procedure, since it allowed them the opportunity to correct errors. But it was also learned that institutions viewed the rejoinder as an advocacy process as well. In interviews after the accreditation process was over, representatives at three schools admitted that the respective team had stated the problems accurately and had drawn appropriate conclusions (which resulted in citations of weaknesses, including findings of Standards not met). Nevertheless, they decided to rebut the team's findings because they felt it
was incumbent on them at least to put the institution's best foot forward.\textsuperscript{43} For the three teams where this occurred, all programs were accredited. As the section on how Audit Committees function shows, Audit Committees often give the benefit of the doubt to the institution because it presents at least some evidence that the task or function is being performed.

F. Institutions Influence Further Participation of Team Members and Team Chairs

In an effort to provide feedback to the person responsible for designing Visiting Teams, NCATE uses evaluation forms for the institution, chairperson, and the team members to fill out upon completion of the visit.\textsuperscript{44}

There are obvious advantages to such a system, since it affords NCATE the opportunity to weed out ineffective team members and weak chairpersons. In addition, it provides feedback on outstanding performance by a team member, one prerequisite for selection as a potential team chairperson. (All potential chairpersons must then complete a special training session before conducting their first assignment.)

One unintended consequence of this system, however, is that institutions may, to a degree, influence future participation of a team member or chairperson whose only "fault" was to probe the program in depth.

Of the eight institutions observed for this study, five completed such evaluations. Four of these institutions, in addition to identifying weak team members, gave negative ratings to team members who reviewed their programs in depth and found numerous weaknesses. On
one of these teams (to a large institution) two of the three team members who reviewed the Standards assigned them in depth were singled out by the institution for criticism. (Both were rated "fair." For two of the other teams (to small institutions), the only people singled out for low ratings were those who dug deeply into the programs. Finally, in the fourth case (also involving a small school), three of the five team members who probed in depth received the lowest ratings ("poor" or "fair"). Another team member who was unable to complete many assignments also was rated "poor.") The last case is particularly instructive since it involved the team that probed most of the Standards in depth. In particular, the team chairperson was criticized.45

Schools that criticize such members do not do so on the grounds that the person identified weaknesses. Instead, they cite personality characteristics. One institution noted:

Dr. ________ initially tried to establish an adversary relationship which we did not appreciate. He got better during the visit.46

Another reported:

We had a problem with Ms. ________. She lacked skills in working with people. We didn't approve of the way she went about gathering information.47

A third alleged that such individuals had come:

...with some personal agenda items that influenced to some extent their individual interpretations of the NCATE Standards and led them to offer unsolicited counsel, as well as to draw some conclusions that we feel are unwarranted within the context in which we must operate as an institution of higher education.48

The problem for the staff person at NCATE responsible for nominating team members is that there is no way of knowing whether such criticism
accurately reflects personality characteristics that could affect objective evaluation or simply reflects the institution's frustration over having to answer some hard questions. Unless independent investigation is made or information from the team chairperson directly contradicts the institution's rating for a team member with a "poor" rating, future participation can be affected.  

In summary, procedures devised to ensure penetration of all programs according to all Standards sometimes are not followed or have unintended consequences. The result is the same, however: the likelihood that one approach to accreditation will prevail is increased. At no time did this investigator observe an institution deliberately trying to subvert the accreditation process (although, as noted earlier, one representative of a program not observed for this research openly stated such was his intent). However, for every team observed, some or all of the factors described above played a role in encouraging a presence-or-absence approach.

To summarize, the way the Standards are written and the procedures are followed (by institutions) have unintended consequences for the accreditation process. The third area in which such consequences contribute to the prevalence of the presence-or-absence approach is described in the next section.

4. Dynamics of Team Visits, Audit Committee Meetings, and Council Deliberations

   A. Visiting Teams

   Given the shortage of time, the shortage of people, and the large numbers of programs to evaluate and requirements to examine for
each program, most team members on seven of the eight teams were found to make a rational choice: they generally avoided quality indicators in the Standards and focused instead on the italicized summaries of the Standards as they collected data and made their judgments. They looked to see if a task or function was performed at all, not at whether it was performed well.

A number of things relevant specifically to team visits contributed to this dynamic—the procedure for recruitment of team members, the materials available to team members, the role of the team chairperson, the specialization of tasks, and the feedback team members received on their performance.

The performance of Visiting Teams is critical to the accreditation process. In many respects, the routines they establish and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures effectively become the policies of NCATE. In short, accreditation decisions by the Council may not be the best place to understand NCATE policy, for in important ways policy is actually made on campus during the visit of the NCATE team. The relationship between the Council (and its Audit Committees) and Visiting Teams, therefore, represents a problem of control.

During the period 1974 through 1978, NCATE headquarters improved its control over team activities by initiating training sessions for prospective team members and requiring successful completion as a prerequisite for participation on a team.* It also implemented the Council's directive

*Such a prerequisite reflects staff and constituent group operating policy, not official Council policy.
that teams reflect the parity composition of the Council (adopted in 1974 to ensure a diversity of representation that would parallel representation on the Council). Finally, as described earlier, NCATE developed an evaluation system to provide feedback from team members as well as institutions on chairpersons. As the following discussion shows, considerable slippage still exists. This raises the question of whether the Council has effectively resolved this issue.

(1) Recruitment: The Role of "Experienced" Team Members and "Observers." One potential strength of NCATE's team recruitment process is that most members have served on teams before (only one team observed had three "rookies," while the rest had only one or two). Such experience should increase the possibility of greater in-depth examination of requirements. But, as found in this study, the likelihood is decreased by two factors. First, some experienced team members on each team had never received training, a situation made possible because NCATE does not enforce its policy that all team members complete a training session prior to participation on a team visit. Second, state "observers," who almost always lacked training, were often used as regular team members.

NCATE has focused its training efforts for team members on prospective members, not on those with experience prior to the inauguration of the training session in 1974. This does not mean that experienced members with no training were incompetent, but only that their expectations had been shaped at a time when NCATE was less vigorous in applying its Standards. Interviews with such members showed that while they felt the procedures for reporting team findings had changed, what
the team looked at and what was judged acceptable performance had remained essentially unchanged.\textsuperscript{50}

Each State Department of Education and each state professional organization is invited to send an observer for each team visiting an institution in that state. NCATE encourages the organizations to send representatives who have NCATE training, but does not require it. State Departments sent observers for every team included in this study, while state professional organizations sent observers to three teams. Only one of the eleven observers had gone through an NCATE training session.*

Had these observers remained observers, their lack of training would have been of no consequence. In fact, in direct violation of NCATE requirements,** team chairpersons for four teams used the observers as official team members with responsibilities for investigating Standards and participating in consensus sessions on whether Standards had been met. Two other teams used State Department representatives to investigate Standards, but limited their role to participation in consensus sessions (i.e., they were not allowed to vote).\textsuperscript{51}

*Excluded from this discussion is the role of three additional representatives from one state to an NCATE team. This visit was a joint NCATE-state visit in which NCATE procedures were modified to permit state representatives to participate fully in all aspects of the evaluation process, including development of the team report. In return, the state commission used the NCATE team report to determine approval for the programs presented. Each state representative had been through an NCATE training session and had served on an NCATE team.

**NCATE's Guidelines for Ethical and Professional Participation state, under Principle #3, the following: "A third principle relates to the propriety of participating in an NCATE evaluation if one had previously participated in some other accreditation--regional visit, state approval, or other." NCATE, Guidelines for Ethical and Professional Participation in Various Council Activities (Washington, D.C.: NCATE, January 1974), p. 1. (xeroxed)
NCATE's policy on observers is intended to preclude direct policymaking by state representatives, to avoid conflict of interest. Their role is to provide background information to the team on requirements and practices in that state that might otherwise confuse the team. State Department representatives certainly performed that role. They also defended institutional practices when these were questioned. Furthermore, in no case where the State Department representatives had responsibility for investigating and reporting on a Standard did a program fail to meet that Standard. For the three representatives from state professional organizations who participated as team members, the result was the same: no programs failed the Standard they investigated. But instead of defending institutional practice, the prevailing pattern for the two who lacked training was silence. They had received copies of the Standards and the Institutional Report only days before the visit and, in interviews, expressed uncertainty as to how best fulfill their responsibilities.

The problem described here illustrates the difficulty of control. While the Council has made its policy clear and NCATE headquarters staff has communicated the policy to chairpersons, team chairpersons, under the press of time, with few people and much to look at, often turned to observers for assistance.

Given the conflict of interest inherent in such situations and the observers' lack of training in NCATE requirements, their involvement serves to encourage the use of a presence-or-absence approach to accreditation and to support its predominance.
(2) Materials. The presence-or-absence approach is also encouraged by the materials team members use during the training sessions and later in the field. To be at all effective as tools for analysis, these aids must be used. Observations of team practices showed that at most only two or three members per team used these documents. Limited use of the materials during team visits encouraged team members to investigate fewer requirements and to base their evaluations on the italicized summaries of the Standards, which are presence-or-absence oriented.

(3) Team Chairpersons. Central to the team visitation process is the role of chairpersons. They are responsible for allocating tasks, supervising the investigation, and leading the team to consensus. To assist team chairpersons (and, in the process, to develop greater influence over their practices), NCATE, throughout its history, has provided training for chairpersons.

As noted earlier, these sessions fail to clarify the many quality indicators in the Standards (see pp. 50-51). Thus, team chairpersons come to a campus with no clear guidelines on what the quality indicators mean, numerous tasks, few people to help carry out those tasks, and only two days to complete the evaluation. It is not surprising that most encourage the use of a presence-or-absence approach. This is most clearly demonstrated during the consensus meetings held on Monday and Tuesday evenings. In spite of directions from NCATE headquarters during training sessions and stated policy that requirements in the Preambles are to be considered part of the Standards, all but one chairperson in this study directed team members to the italicized summaries when decisions
were made on whether Standards had been met.\textsuperscript{54}

Moreover, consensus sessions were found consistently to develop their own dynamic: considerable peer pressure was put on those who voiced concerns or attempted to present evidence pro and con to hold their comments to a minimum. This was particularly the case on large teams visiting schools with many programs. Given the general fatigue, the shortage of time before all gave out, and the number of programs to review, such pressure was entirely understandable; however, the result for most teams was a process different from that prescribed by NCATE. Instead of debating the evidence, teams typically went from person to person, asking if there were any problems (or, during the Tuesday session, for their recommendation for judging the Standards met or unmet). Discussions, when they occurred, were spent equally on tasks or functions not performed at all and those where conflicting evidence was raised.\textsuperscript{55}

Furthermore, in spite of the best efforts of NCATE headquarters staff, most team chairpersons observed evidenced some confusion over specific procedures to be followed during the team visits, which reduced the time available to discuss requirements in depth and thus contributed to the prevalence of a presence-or-absence approach.\textsuperscript{56}

Finally, team chairpersons provided interpretations of Standards and modified team conclusions in a direction that weakened their impact. By focusing on the italicized part of the Standard, team chairpersons frequently encouraged a narrow interpretation of the requirements. On two teams, chairpersons encouraged members to change findings of weakness
to concerns, even though NCATE procedures do not allow for the expression of "concerns." 57

In sum, the ability of NCATE to control its teams is directly related to its ability to control its team chairpersons. Observation of team visits shows considerable slippage between stated policy and actual practice, with the result that the opportunity to probe a program in depth is reduced.

(4) Specialization of Tasks. Team members are assigned specific Standards to investigate. Every effort is made to assign two team members, one with primary and one with secondary responsibility, to each Standard to increase penetration of the program and to ensure that weaknesses or strengths identified by one person are corroborated by a second. The person with primary responsibility also does the writing for that Standard. For Standards such as the Curricula family, which require a program-by-program analysis (in contrast to the Governance and Evaluation and Planning families, which can be examined across programs), additional persons may be assigned to look at component Standards for a number of programs.

While such specialization is necessary, it has the potential for limiting efforts to relate requirements in one Standard to those in another. This occurs most often on visits to large schools with many programs. Pressed for time, team members concentrated first on their own areas of major responsibility. Often this left little or no time to pursue Standards for which they had secondary responsibility. Consensus meetings where evidence was supposed to be discussed by the entire team became,
instead, "round-robin" affairs; members were asked only if they had encountered any problems, or for their recommendations on whether the Standard should be judged met or not met. Little sharing of information among team members occurred, and almost no effort was made to explore the implications of evidence in one area for the requirements in other areas. When it did occur, it tended to occur on a small team where there were fewer programs to evaluate or on a large team where the chairperson decided to emphasize certain Standards over others. In short, an organizational necessity (specialization of tasks), given certain constraints (time, number of evaluators, magnitude of task, vague quality indicators) for institutions of a certain size, contributed to the use of a presence-or-absence approach and supported its dominance as the operating mode for making decisions.  

(5) Feedback to Team Members and Chairpersons on Their Performance. While NCATE has procedures for learning how institutions, team chairpersons, and team members view their experience, there are no procedures for transmitting that information to participants so they can improve their performance in the future.

This has the consequence of reinforcing the prevailing approach toward accreditation. Team members and chairpersons learn by doing. The socialization process on nearly every team observed for this research was that members should look to see if a task or function were performed at all; simply being chosen again represents confirmation that the job done before was "well done." This increases the likelihood that members will use the same approach again. The lack of feedback, in other words, helps to define future assumptions of what is expected.
In addition, no procedures exist for informing team members and chairpersons of the Council's decisions. This means they have no systematic method for learning how Council members view their findings. This is especially important for teams where Audit Committees found gaps of evidence in team reports or were confused over team interpretations of certain requirements in the Standards. In short, omissions or mistakes, once made, are likely to be repeated.

The picture is now complete for Visiting Teams. For most Visiting Teams, numerous procedures lead to unintended consequences that push the team in the direction of using a presence-or-absence approach. How does this process work at the Council level?

B. Audit Committees and Council Deliberations

By definition of its title, an "Audit Committee" is restricted in its ability to evaluate programs in depth.* Council members, in their role as Audit Committee members, are not expected to go beyond information provided in the Visiting Team Report. If there are discrepancies between what is stated in the Institutional Report and the findings of the Visiting Team, Audit Committee members are to assume the team probed those areas and found them to be satisfactory.  

This role definition assumes that the team involved probed in depth. In fact, as the previous pages have demonstrated, no team probed

*Audit Committees are a relatively recent creation (1979), replacing an earlier procedure by which an Evaluation Board reviewed findings and institutional materials in a two-hour session with the team chairperson and representatives from the institution. The justification for change came in part from Council dissatisfaction with Evaluation Board recommendations (some felt they were too lenient, and others felt the Council's hands were tied) and in part from the Council's belief that the system of team training has led to a cadre of persons better able than before to carry out the Council's mandates (thus reducing the need for an Evaluation Board to check team findings). (Interviews)
all Standards in depth, and few probed even most Standards. Most teams for which the presence-or-absence approach prevailed have not evaluated a large number of Standards.

Audit Committee members express considerable anxiety over whether to perform this role—and if so, how. It comes to a head when team reports are reviewed. Team chairpersons are instructed to write reports program-by-program, addressing each Standard in turn. [Some Standards (such as Governance or Evaluation and Planning) are usually reported on an all-program basis.]

They are supposed to note any omissions or corrections to the Institutional Report, list sources of evidence, strengths and weaknesses, and the team's consensus on whether the Standard was met or not. Most reports, however, often leave out the first section, state "none" under strengths and weaknesses, and report the Standard as "met." This is an obvious and logical result of the presence-or-absence approach. The team member responsible for that Standard found some evidence it was being performed and judged it adequate.

Audit Committee members, when they return to the Institutional Report and find certain requirements under a Standard not addressed, are left in a quandry. Did the team actually investigate this area? If so, why was it not addressed? If not, how serious is the weakness? Perhaps it could be cleared up with a simple question.

Time constraints now enter the picture. Audit Committees have only an afternoon and evening to review and prepare recommendations.

Procedures add to the dilemma. Each committee must fill out forms to report the results of deliberations on each institution. This typically takes a considerable amount of time (weaknesses or Standards
not met must be written out in detail since they are later communicated to the institution in the final Action Letter). Each committee also decides the order in which it will review reports. A typical solution is to postpone until last institutions for which information is most unclear. This means that time and general fatigue will have a correspondingly greater impact on the outcome. Finally, each committee has a copy of the Institution's Rejoinder, which can further muddy the waters if it seeks to rebut team conclusions.

The stage is now set for a wide variety of responses, which, in fact, do occur and are summarized in the table below.

Table 1
Audit Committee Responses by Type of Visiting Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visiting Team</th>
<th>Presence-Absence</th>
<th>In-depth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presence-Absence</td>
<td>5*</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Depth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some programs reviewed in depth by one Audit Committee.

a. Presence-Absence Visiting Team/Presence-Absence Audit Committees

In most Audit Committees the presence-or-absence approach prevailed. Thus, for five of the institutions observed for this research where a presence-or-absence approach prevailed on the team visit, the
same approach prevailed at the Audit Committee level.

For four institutions, the presence-or-absence approach prevailed in the examination of all programs: gaps in the team report were accepted, rebuttals from institutions were accepted when they contradicted information provided by the team, and decisions were made in rapid-fire manner, with scarcely enough time to turn the pages of the Visiting Team Report.\(^{61}\)

In one of the four cases, the process, and hence the outcome, might have been different. The Audit Committee had concluded a lengthy, in-depth analysis of an innovative program\(^{62}\) just before examining the programs at this institution. One member of the Audit Committee spent the entire time writing up the findings while programs at this institution were discussed. That member happened to be one of the Council's most outspoken proponents of the in-depth approach. His nonparticipation during consideration of this institution's programs allowed the other two committee members to proceed rapidly through the process.\(^{63}\)

In a second case, the presence-or-absence approach prevailed, but with a wrinkle. The team had identified four Standards as not met (including all three in the Evaluation and Planning family). After reviewing these Standards quickly and agreeing they were not met, the Audit Committee discussed the team's report on the practicum subcomponent (2.3.4), which showed that the school had no influence over placement of its teachers. One committee member felt this weakness so serious that it warranted a decision that the Standard was not met. The others concurred.
The chairperson noted that five Standards had been found not met. He then stated:

Either we have to disagree with some of these findings and approve a few Standards, or we have to deny accreditation.\textsuperscript{64}

The committee then returned to the Evaluation and Planning family and decided to reverse its earlier decision and approve two Standards on the basis of evidence appended by the Visiting Team to its report, evidence the team had judged completely inadequate. The decision was made to recommend accreditation for all four programs submitted by the institution.\textsuperscript{65}

For the fifth institution, the presence-or-absence approach prevailed in the review of all programs but one. While that program had failed only three Standards, the team member responsible for this program had provided considerable information on various strengths and weaknesses, which in turn were documented in the team report. On the Audit Committee was a representative from that same subject matter area. She consistently focused the committee's attention on the numerous weaknesses and their overall effect on the quality of the program. After a split vote, the committee recommended to the Council that it deny accreditation to that program. All the other programs were reviewed quickly, using a presence-or-absence approach.\textsuperscript{66}

b. \textbf{Presence-Absence Visiting Teams/In-Depth Audit Committees}

Two Audit Committees examined in depth team reports that reflected a presence-or-absence approach. One cross-checked information, did its own calculations in some areas, and determined that two additional
Standards had not been met. After discussing the overall effects of the strengths and weaknesses of the programs, it recommended accreditation for all four programs.⁶⁷

The second Audit Committee took a slightly different approach. Normally, committees consist of three members (one representing each of the three major constituency blocks in NCATE). In this case, because of the last minute decision of one Council member not to attend, the committee had only two members. From the outset, the two were hopelessly deadlocked on virtually every program. One felt denial of accreditation should not be considered unless more than three Standards had been judged not met; the other felt it was more important to see which Standards had not been met. In the end, a compromise was reached. For programs where four Standards had not been met and the member who advocated the in-depth approach felt these were "critical" Standards, the committee recommended denial. Where three or fewer had been judged not met and they appeared less "critical" to this member, the decision was to recommend accreditation.⁶⁸

c. In-Depth Visiting Team/Presence-Absence Audit Committee

For the one institution where an in-depth team evaluation occurred, the following events transpired in the Audit Committee. The chairperson announced at the outset his feeling that since only three Standards had not been met, all programs should be approved. Having set the tone, he then directed the members to those Standards. The committee eventually determined that one (the practicum subcomponent where practices at the Teacher Center affected the team's judgment) should be changed
to "met with a weakness." This was done in response to the institution's rejoinder, which pointed out that at a neighboring institution visited only two weeks later, the Teacher Center had been found to be an asset to the program. In reaching their decision, Audit Committee members expressed concern that upholding the team's judgment might lead to a denial and later an appeal, should the other institution be accredited. (NCATE has no procedure to see that institutions with cooperative relationships are viewed by the same Audit Committee.) In addition, one team member remarked:

If we flunk them on the practicum, it's so crucial they might not be able to pass. \(^6^9\)

Besides the two Standards the committee judged not met, it added a third from the Evaluation and Planning family. It accepted the institution's response to the many weaknesses listed under other Standards without reexamining the Visiting Team's Report to see if the response actually addressed the team's findings. Because it found only three Standards not met, it recommended accreditation for all four programs. \(^7^0\)

In summary, a certain capriciousness surrounds Audit Committee decisions. Just as the luck of the draw plays a role in determining whether a team examines in depth, so too with Audit Committees. But most of the time, in reviewing most team reports Audit Committees pursue a presence-or-absence approach.

It is not necessary to dwell extensively on Council deliberations. With rare exceptions, the Council follows Audit Committee recommendations. Debates, when they occur, center on programs evaluated in depth by an Audit Committee; when the committee has recommended denial, members
are questioned closely about their rationale. Given the large number of decisions to be made, the shortage of time, and the limited information about the programs, it would be difficult to pursue anything but a presence-or-absence approach.

Considering the many unintended consequences of procedures used in the NCATE accreditation process, it is not surprising that participants take shortcuts to (1) organize their work so as to derive a set of findings within the resource constraints they encounter; (2) modify the concepts of their jobs by lowering expectations of evidence necessary to meet the Standards, in order to reduce the gap between available resources and the responsibility to evaluate all requirements for all programs; and (3) modify their concepts of what the Standards require to make more acceptable the gap between what they find and what the Standards require. 71

Studies of organizations and how individuals make decisions within organizations would have predicted such behavior. Simply put, it is impossible to develop complete information, generate all possible alternatives, and calculate all consequences in terms of all values. As Herbert Simon notes, such requirements expect "...powers of pre-science and capabilities for computation which are usually attributed to God." 72 Instead, given the limits of human capability in comparison with the complexities of problems faced, individuals attempt to be rational. But such attempts are bounded. Because of these bounds, rational action requires simplified models that extract the main features of a problem without capturing all of its complexity. 73
When confronted by a choice, individuals construct a simplified model of the real situation. This "definition of the situation," as sociologists call it, is built on past experience (including prejudices and stereotypes) and on highly particularized, selective views of present stimuli. Most responses are "routine"; the individual invokes solutions he or she has used before. When problems must be solved, the individual conducts a limited search for alternatives, along familiar paths, selecting the first satisfactory one that comes along. All possible alternatives are not examined. Nor does the individual search for the optimum one. Instead, he or she "satisfices," that is, selects the first satisfactory solution instead of searching for the optimum. Individuals, in other words, are happy to find the needle in the haystack and shy away from searching for the sharpest needle.

Thus, it is not surprising to learn that participants in the NCATE process "satisfice." The interesting finding is the level at which such "satisficing" occurs, and the reasons for choosing that level, since studies also show that organizations influence the expectations that guide individual decision-making (e.g., the definition of the situation). While no organization can expect its members always to search for the sharpest needle (at least for long), some organizations succeed in establishing expectations that encourage participants to search for a needle at least sharp enough to sew with.

While NCATE's stated purpose is to protect the public interest by regulating the marketplace, its practices and procedures create a definite bias in favor of institutions. While NCATE has established much of the infrastructure needed to become an effective monitor of
program quality, the cumulative effects of unintended consequences severely limit its ability to pursue its stated mission in practice.

Chapter 4 examines the conditions under which the in-depth approach prevailed.
CHAPTER 4

WHY THE IN-DEPTH APPROACH OCCURS

Why does the in-depth approach ever occur, let alone prevail?

Could its appearance be related simply to a weak program? Perhaps any Visiting Team or Audit Committee observing the same program would have acted in the same way. Perhaps those few individuals who examined programs in depth when the presence-or-absence approach prevailed on the team did so simply because the programs were poor in the areas for which they had responsibility. Perhaps Audit Committee members focused just on the weak programs.

It must be concluded that use of the in-depth approach is more a reflection of how team and Council members define their mission and pursue their tasks and less a reflection of the quality of the program.

Before examining evidence in support of this conclusion, it should be reiterated that most teams took the in-depth approach only rarely, examining at most three to five Standards in this way. (An exception was one team that evaluated fourteen of twenty-four Standards in depth.) At the Council level certain members often pursued such an approach, but their numbers were also small. In the analysis that follows, it is important to keep this in mind—the in-depth approach represents the exception, not the rule.

Chapters 2 and 3 have shown that numerous constraints operated
to encourage team, Audit Committee, and Council members to accept any claim that a task or function had been performed. These constraints and their effects were independent of program quality. For example, for institutions that submitted weak Institutional Reports, NCATE did not learn how strong or weak the programs were, since teams spent nearly all their time reconstructing those programs instead of evaluating them. A finding of a Standard not met usually was the result of judging a task or function not performed at all, not the result of an in-depth evaluation. The sum total of these constraints, it was argued, pushed most participants in a presence-or-absence direction regardless of their initial inclinations.

Where in-depth evaluation did occur, the tone set by the team chairperson or Audit Committee member played an important role. This is illustrated by a comparison of the procedures used by two teams to evaluate a common problem, the state-mandated Teacher Center.\textsuperscript{1} Such a comparison shows that negative evidence available to team and Council members was either not uncovered or not used when the presence-or-absence approach prevailed. In short, the comparison shows that the approach used is to some degree independent from the quality of the program.

It will be remembered that the team that pursued an in-depth approach spent many hours investigating the effects of Teacher Center practices on the field experience requirements of the Curricula family. After weighing conflicting evidence in numerous areas (criteria for selecting supervising teachers, training of supervisory teachers,
placement of aides and practicum students, and evaluation procedures, to
name a few), the team considered the ultimate effect to be negative and
judged the Standard not met.

A major reason for the tenacity of the team in this area was the
set of expectations created at the outset by the team chairperson for all
Standards for all programs. In contrast to the other team chairperson,
this chairperson arrived a day before the team to gather additional
information he had requested during his previsit. He had the team arrive
by noon on Sunday so the preliminary assignments could be discussed that
afternoon. (All team members had received their assignments and materials
six weeks before the visit.) He then held a lengthy evening meeting during
which each Standard was discussed. He emphasized the importance of linking
requirements in the Preambles to those in the italicized summaries of the
Standards. This encouraged team members to ask questions, debate, and
decide how quality indicators might best be operationalized. It also
encouraged a discussion of how requirements in one Standard could be re-
lated to requirements in others.

During the Monday and Tuesday evening sessions, each lasting well
past midnight, he actively solicited comments from other team members
after each person reported on his or her area of responsibility. This
often led to presentation of additional evidence and lengthy discussion.
This was particularly the case for Standards such as this one, for which
information was conflicting. Decisions in such areas were not reached
easily, and sometimes votes were taken. When Standards were found to be
met, numerous weaknesses were elaborated. Controversy over this Standard
(as well as two others) was such that a final decision, in fact, was held over until Wednesday morning to allow team members to check additional information.

In contrast, the chairperson of the second team, which visited a neighboring school with an identical relationship with the Teacher Center only two weeks later, asked team members to arrive by late afternoon on Sunday in time for a dinner hosted by the school. Following the dinner the group met briefly to discuss assignments. At that time, the chairperson explained her understanding that the Preambles were only an introduction to the Standards and that team members should focus most of their attention on the summary Standards. She repeated this interpretation on Monday and Tuesday evening when evidence was considered and consensus was finally reached. These meetings lasted only two to three hours each and were conducted in a round-robin style, usually with little elaboration or discussion of each participant's presentation.

Following the chairperson's advice to focus attention on the summary Standards, the team member responsible for Standards that involved the Teacher Center (the laboratory and clinical experience and practicum subcomponents---2.3.3 and 2.3.4) spent much of her time reviewing university classroom videotape and micro-teaching opportunities and observing methods courses, instead of examining Teacher Center practices. This was in accord with the summary Standard for laboratory and clinical experience, which states:

The professional studies component of each curriculum includes the systematic study of teaching and learning theory with appropriate laboratory and clinical experience.
Had this team member focused on the Preamble, she would have seen the requirement that

...field experiences early in the student's program of study [which] illuminate and demonstrate... principles [of practice derived from teaching and learning theory].³

By avoiding this requirement, she failed to examine whether students had the chance to try out different approaches to teaching learned in their methods courses. Had she approached the Standard from the perspective of the requirements in the Preamble as well as the Summary Standard, she might have followed up on student frustrations with their field experiences voiced during a meeting with students doing their practice teaching.

Instead, when questions were directed to representatives of the Teacher Center, they focused on general areas of responsibility and responses were accepted at face value. Team members learned that the Center provided a forum for institutions to place aides and student teachers, that cooperating teachers received inservice training in how to supervise, and that cooperating teachers participated in the evaluation process of student teachers through the Teacher Center. But no follow-up was ever made of interview data by an examination of actual practice.

The result was that one team found problems and another did not. The evidence was there, but the approach determined, in part, whether it was found. At the Council level, as discussed earlier, the Audit Committee for the first school had information about the Teacher Center but decided to cite the problem as a weakness instead of as a Standard not met because of concern that an appeal might overturn any recommendation to deny the
program. The presence-or-absence finding that the Teacher Center represented a strength for the second school played an important role in this Audit Committee's determination. (It will be remembered that the school with the negative finding pointed to the positive finding at the neighboring school in its Institutional Rejoinder to the team report. It should also be noted that follow-up interviews with staff at the school with the negative finding showed they agreed with the team's assessment of the weakness, but not with its overall judgment. (See pp. 80-81 and p. 157).

A second illustration shows that evidence can exist but may never be used, in part because of the tone established by the chairperson. (Since this example is discussed in greater detail in Part II, Consequences of the Presence-or-Absence Approach, it is described only briefly at this point.) Not long before one team visit, two reports appeared that raised serious questions about the quality of programs at the institution; one focused specifically on a program in the College of Education. The regional accrediting agency had commissioned one study, while the second was an internal "Blue Ribbon" report. Both reports detailed numerous weaknesses, most of which could have been directly related to NCATE Standards. The team chairperson had read the reports and had seen to it that copies were available to team members. He also asked team members to read the reports, but he failed to check to see that his request was followed. Only two of the members read one or both reports, and in later interviews they acknowledged that even they had failed to use the information in the reports to design their questions.4
A third piece of evidence that the tone set by the team chairperson affects the level of penetration comes from interviews with participants in the process. Follow-up interviews with representatives of three of the seven institutions evaluated primarily by the presence-or-absence approach found them surprised (and in two cases, dismayed) that NCATE had failed to criticize certain programs (even to the point of denying accreditation). As one chairperson put it:

The team missed many problems in the K-12 program. The Art Education program stinks. No one there is interested in teacher education. They hire part-time people to teach studio art and give our students nothing. The same thing is true in the music department. All they emphasize is performance. I put that as diplomatically as I could in the Institutional Report and hoped the team would pick it up, but they never did.

While team chairpersons can create an environment in which an in-depth approach can emerge, ultimately team members make it happen. While some members were observed to shift from a presence-or-absence approach to an in-depth approach in response to data that raised questions about the quality of performance, more were observed to pursue the in-depth approach from the beginning. Typically, these individuals came to the visit well prepared, with questions already in hand. They followed the questions in the back of the Standards and followed the procedures in a qualitatively different way. No matter what their assignment, they were more probing in their questions, more demanding of the evidence they would accept, and more careful in their cross-checking of information than other team members.
Direct observation that team chairperson expectations affected the level of penetration was supplemented by interviews with team members regarding experience on other NCATE teams. Members of presence-or-absence teams reported their experiences to be basically similar to other NCATE teams on which they had served. (Those on teams with incomplete Institutional Reports showed greater variation.)

In contrast, members on the team that evaluated in depth reported it to be a qualitatively different experience. That other teams pursuing the in-depth approach operate in ways strikingly similar to the one observed for this research is further demonstrated by a team visit reconstructed through interviews (see Appendix A). (This visit was reconstructed on the advice of a team member on one presence-or-absence visit who recounted how different this other NCATE experience had been.)

Direct observation of Audit Committee and Council deliberations on the eight teams followed for this research was also supplemented by observation of additional Audit Committee meetings and remaining Council deliberations for all institutions reviewed over a twelve-month period (four Council meetings). This provided the opportunity to see the two approaches played out on numerous occasions. The result was the same. Two members would examine the same material and develop different findings depending on whether all requirements in a Standard were applied or only those in the summary.

In summary, while unintended consequences of otherwise well-conceived procedures generally pushed team and Council members in the direction of a presence-or-absence approach, on occasion the in-depth
approach emerged or even prevailed. When this happened the role of the team chairperson or Audit Committee members in raising expectations was found to be critical. In such cases the dominance of one approach over the other was linked more to how team and Council members defined their mission and pursued their tasks and less to the quality of the program.
PART II

DOES NCATE ACCREDITATION GUARANTEE MINIMUM QUALITY?
INTRODUCTION

Part II will argue that the presence-or-absence approach leads to programs being accredited that should be denied. It must therefore be questioned whether NCATE accreditation represents a guarantee of minimum quality.

Before this basic weakness is documented, a fundamental strength of the NCATE accreditation process needs to be discussed. The presence-or-absence approach usually identifies obvious weaknesses and, when these weaknesses are numerous, the approach generally results in denial. Since most programs are reviewed by this process, denial by NCATE represents a clear signal to the public that the program is inferior (as judged by NCATE Standards). NCATE does at least "regulate" some of the worst teacher education programs.*

Evidence that NCATE's accreditation process usually uncovers major problems is provided by a review of Action Letters detailing reasons for denial. Programs denied accreditation suffer from serious problems that run the gamut of NCATE Standards, as one 1979 Action Letter, selected at random, shows:

Nearly all institutions demonstrate both strengths and weaknesses in their professional programs when these are evaluated through application of NCATE Standards. In arriving at its decision, the Council cited the following

*As noted earlier (p. 4), many schools do not seek NCATE accreditation. Some probably fear denial; others define their mission in areas NCATE does not emphasize (e.g., research), and, for that reason, probably see little value in NCATE accreditation. Others probably feel NCATE evaluation is too expensive. Finally (but without exhausting the possibilities), others probably feel that since state agencies have the legal responsibility for certifying graduates, they need be responsive only to Standards set by those agencies.
Strengths and weaknesses of basic programs at 

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3.4</td>
<td>The quality of college supervision of secondary student teaching was regarded as excellent and a definite program strength.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Student participation in decision-making phases of program development is limited to one student member on one faculty committee. The standard was thereby regarded as not met.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 3.1       | Little evidence was found of service, research, or scholarly activity of the teacher education faculty. |
| 3.3       | Faculty were determined to be teaching excessive instructional loads. |
| 3.4       | Institutional support for in-service education of faculty, sabbatical leaves, and out-of-state professional travel is insufficient to promote faculty development. |

| 4.1       | No evidence was provided of any systematic method for determining the effectiveness of criteria of [sic] admission to the teacher education program. |
| 4.2       | Although criteria for student retention are implied in the rating forms utilized in several specific courses, no clearly-stated retention criteria nor time deadlines were in evidence for the general programs. |

| 6.1       | Although the Council recognizes that the visiting team may have been in error in not noting the evaluation study conducted by the institution in 1978, there was no evidence that the institution is keeping abreast of evaluation techniques. Evaluation instruments do not reflect stated program goals. |
6.2 There is no evidence that any program changes have been the outcome of evaluation efforts.

6.3 Present efforts to establish the status of the institution within the state system have deterred plans for long-range development of teacher education within a total institutional plan. This, plus the absence of systematic evaluation, precludes the meeting of this standard.¹

Further support for this point comes from a study by NCATE's Director of all programs denied accreditation in 1979. He reported in NCATE's newsletter:

...no program was denied accreditation for weaknesses in less than two families of Standards. The average program, in fact, was cited for weaknesses over seven individual Standards from among four different families.²

In short, institutions are not denied accreditation for failing to meet one Standard.*

Given the prevalence of the presence-or-absence approach at every level of the accreditation process, denial means that many tasks or functions simply are not being performed at all. Denied programs, by NCATE Standards, are clearly inferior. In this sense, NCATE does at least regulate some of the worst teacher education programs. But does it capture all inferior programs? What about those that are only marginally better? These questions are addressed in the next two chapters.

*In the future, however, they may be denied should they fail an entire "family" of Standards. A policy to this effect is presently in abeyance pending final approval of revisions in the Governance Standard.
CHAPTER 5

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING NCATE'S GUARANTEE OF MINIMUM QUALITY

NCATE accreditation is represented to be a guarantee of minimum quality. The Introduction to the Standards states this mission clearly:

NCATE accreditation attests to the quality of preparation programs and signifies that persons recommended by the institution can be expected to perform satisfactorily in typical teaching and other professional school positions throughout the United States.... [T]he Standards...applied to programs are "minimum Standards"....

NCATE's Director underscored this mission in testimony before the U.S. Office of Education (now the Department of Education) in support of a petition for continued recognition by the Commissioner of Education as the sole national accrediting agency for teacher preparation programs. He stated:

The conferring of NCATE accreditation certifies to the public that programs have been evaluated and found to meet standards of quality...appropriate for the preparation of professionals and deserving of public trust and support.

That programs accredited by NCATE represent such a minimum guarantee of quality rests on three assumptions about the NCATE process:

- Programs have been evaluated according to NCATE requirements;
- Programs have met NCATE requirements; and
• Programs from different institutions have been evaluated in a similar way.

This chapter shows that the assumptions are invalid. The next documents the resulting wide variation in quality among programs accredited by NCATE. The thesis of both chapters is that one must question whether NCATE's stamp of approval represents a guarantee of minimum quality, given its present approach to accreditation.

1. Assumption: Programs Have Been Evaluated According to NCATE Requirements

Part I showed one result of the presence-or-absence approach was that many requirements in each Standard were neither investigated nor evaluated. Just the existence of a task or function summarized in the "Standard" was sufficient to deem an entire Standard met.

One Standard in particular consistently stood out as receiving inadequate treatment: Use of Guidelines Developed by National Learned Societies and Professional Associations (2.4 of the Curricula family). This Standard, it will be remembered, requires:

• Teaching faculty responsible for designing the curriculum to be familiar with the guidelines and recommendations of professional associations and national learned societies;

• Such faculty to provide an explicit rationale for selecting and implementing pertinent sets of recommendations for each teacher education program; or

• An explicit rationale for not including such recommendations.3

This Standard is a critical component of the Curricula family. It provides the single most important method for reviewing content offerings in subject area programs (e.g., secondary programs such as
math, English, history, or the sciences or specialist programs such as guidance and counseling or school psychology).

NCATE has long debated the issue of subject area accreditation. In contrast to state agencies, which typically devote most of their efforts to subject specialty program components, NCATE has chosen to review all the various tasks or functions that contribute to a quality program (e.g., Governance, Faculty, Evaluation and Planning), including subject area performance. Instead of detailing requirements for each subject area, NCATE requires each subject area to demonstrate it has considered guidelines in designing its programs—or, if specific society or association guidelines have been rejected, to explain why they were rejected and to describe the alternatives used.

One method for investigating compliance with this requirement would be to learn if:

- Department officials were familiar with guidelines relevant to their programs;
- Department officials had guidelines readily available;
- Guidelines were disseminated to students in the program;
- Guidelines were discussed in departmental or faculty meetings;
- Guidelines were reflected in curriculum requirements; and
- Department officials had rationales if guidelines were not used.

Such an approach would show actual performance and avoid reliance solely on interview data.

No team pursued such an approach. Instead, team members generally relied on Institutional Reports which asserted compliance.
through faculty participation in professional associations or listed faculty memberships in such associations. As noted earlier (pp. 28-29) when questions were asked of area or department heads, they were generally in the form of leading questions that elicited expected responses. The reasons this component was not investigated thoroughly are clear: teams do not have access to guidelines before a visit, and team members assigned to review subject area specialties are few. Considering the present size of an NCATE team, one cannot expect the person (or, in some cases, the two people) responsible for the numerous secondary programs (often six to eight) to probe even one of these areas in depth.

2. Assumptions: Programs Have Met NCATE Requirements

If programs have been evaluated against only some of NCATE's requirements (i.e., by the presence-or-absence approach), it would be incorrect to assume they have met all or even most of the requirements. Part I demonstrated this point.

Moreover, some Standards consistently were observed to be interpreted in favor of the institution, not in terms of NCATE requirements. The best illustration of this is Standard 5.3 (Physical Facilities and Other Resources). To meet this Standard, programs must show, among other things, that their physical facilities are adequate to carry out the instructional and research activities of the program.⁵ On three campuses, there were serious problems with the physical facilities housing the teacher education programs.⁶ Office space was inadequate (team members could not even get into some offices, while others were
arranged in "bullpen" style with narrow aisles between the desks and no dividers), storage space was nonexistent, or classrooms were few (one department had access to only two classrooms for its entire program).

In each case, the institution passed the Standard. In each case, team members weighed NCATE's requirements against perceptions of some faculty and most administrators that, given their programs, the facilities were adequate. The general rationale for accepting the institution's perception of adequacy is reflected in the following comment, made by one team member in arguing for approval:

Why do they need anything better, if the people are content and not asking for anything more?

3. Assumption: Standards Have Been Applied Consistently

The integrity of NCATE's evaluation process depends on the clarity of its Standards and the consistency of their application. Institutions have the right both to know what criteria will be used to evaluate their teacher education programs and to be assured that the criteria will be applied in the same way to all institutions.

Part I has already demonstrated that NCATE Standards are vague. They are replete with general phrases that require tasks or functions to be performed at levels of quality which are never defined. This creates the potential for inconsistent application.

This potential is realized in practice. At the level of general team or general Audit Committee performance, the inconsistency is expressed in the two approaches to accreditation—but the degree of inconsistency is not great, since most Visiting Teams and Council members solve the problem of applying vague quality indicators by avoiding it. Instead,
they focus on whether a task or function is performed at all. Only when no evidence can be found, or when it is clear to all the team members that performance is unacceptable, is a Standard judged not met. Similarly, only when numerous weaknesses are found (including, generally, a minimum of four Standards not met) are programs denied accreditation.

In contrast, a few teams and Council members look for more than minimum performance. They are interested in quality in the programs they are evaluating and do not hesitate to develop operational definitions of the Standards' vague quality indicators. In so doing, these evaluators are, in effect, applying a different, more rigorous set of Standards.

The consequences for an individual school can be great. Most schools will be reviewed by a team or an Audit Committee on which the presence-or-absence approach prevails; obvious problems will be identified and reported back as weaknesses or Standards not met. Unless a number of tasks or functions are found deficient, accreditation is assured. But schools cannot predict when they might get a team that pursues an in-depth approach or, even more to the point, when they will be reviewed by an Audit Committee that decides to go in depth and overrule a positive team report. Since institutions respond only to a team's negative findings, reversals by Audit Committees cause understandable outrage. Institutions appeal such denials on the grounds that the Audit Committees failed to consider information available to the teams, and often their appeals are upheld by Appeals Board Panels. This leads to Council reconsideration of many such cases, at the loss of considerable time and potential expense. ⁹
Turning from general patterns to specific teams and Audit Committees that pursued only the presence-or-absence approach, a second level of inconsistency emerges. While team and Audit Committees pursuing the presence-or-absence approach will document most obvious weaknesses, some members at each level will investigate some Standards in depth and uncover problems another member would have missed by using the presence-or-absence approach. This has already been demonstrated in Part I with reference to the Teacher Center.

Finally, there is a problem in applying the Governance and the Evaluation and Planning Standards, at least at large schools. These two Standards were applied inconsistently by teams using the presence-or-absence approach. One team applied each Standard on an institutional level; one applied each Standard on a department-by-department level; and one team applied each at different levels.\textsuperscript{9} For the five small schools, the Governance Standard was applied at the institutional level and the Evaluation and Planning Standard at the program level.\textsuperscript{10} Given the Council's present emphasis on these two Standards,* such inconsistency could have important consequences for an institution. All programs might fail a Standard because no institutional procedure existed; or only a couple might fail if the Standards were applied at the program level. Widely differing decisions on accreditation might then result. What forms did these inconsistencies take?

The Governance Standard requires that a "...particular unit within the institution officially [be] designated as responsible for teacher

*see pp. 124-125.
education...[T]he design, approval, and continuous evaluation and
development of teacher education programs are the primary responsibility
of...[this] unit."¹¹ One team found that the College of Education failed
to exercise primary responsibility over these areas with respect to
several programs (the B.F.A. program in art education, the health and
physical education programs, and the MAT programs) and decided the
Standard was not met for all programs.¹² A second team found the
identical situation on another campus with respect to the secondary and
K-12 programs at the basic level, but decided the Standard was not met
for only those two programs.¹³ The third team applied the Standard at the
institutional level and judged all programs to have met the Standard.¹⁴

Interviews with team chairpersons showed widely varying interpre-
tations of the appropriate level at which to apply this Standard.
The chairperson of the first team argued for the institutional approach:

This Standard can only be met on an institutional
basis. You need to identify a unit and someone
responsible for the teacher education program. You
are looking for some type of institutional policy
locating responsibility for the teacher education
program as a whole. Once you have located the unit,
you examine its membership in terms of the character-
istics described in the Standard. At

outside the domain of the School of Education. One
person, for example, was running the M.A.T. program
outside the School. There was no relationship at
all.¹⁵

The chairperson of the second team used the following rationale:

We are judging a program. We are looking to see if
there is sufficient evidence to accredit a K-12
program, elementary program, secondary program, etc.
Under the Governance Standard, one program might
meet it while another might not. The question you
ask is, "Who is in charge?" "Who governs this
program?" You might be able to identify someone for one program but not for another. [institution] was one of the clearest examples of this I have ever seen. For special education, education administration, and elementary education, you could determine who was in charge. For secondary and K-12, governance was fragmented all over the university. I asked the Dean of the School of Performing Arts (Music and Art) and was told, "We are unilaterally responsible for the conception, development and administration of the programs in music and art." I asked Dean [of the College of Education], "Who is in charge?" and he said, "I don't know." I asked the President and got a different answer. 

For the Evaluation and Planning Standards (6.1, 6.2, and 6.3), one team used an institutional approach and two used a departmental approach. In the first case, all programs were found to have failed two of the three Standards, at both the basic and advanced levels; in contrast, the departmental approach led to all programs passing at one school, and all programs failing at the basic level, but variation at the advanced level, at the other school. The chairperson who applied the Standards at the institutional level argued:

This Standard can't be met by each department doing its own thing. It could be met at the department level only if there was some type of governance structure to bring together what each department found with some type of feedback mechanism in the curricular and program development on a schoolwide basis. There needs to be a consistent pattern of evaluation over the entire teacher education program rather than leaving it up to the departments in a laissez faire fashion.

The first chairperson who applied the Standards on a departmental level stated:

This Standard could be met by departments, that is on a program-by-program basis. It can be an entity unto itself, where departments are just evaluating their graduates once they are in the field.
The third chairperson remarked:

I don't know which way is best. I do it by departments. If the Council doesn't like it, it better make up its mind and tell me what it wants.\textsuperscript{20}

Thus, observation of teams and Audit Committees as they implement NCATE Standards shows there is a problem of consistency at two levels: (1) between teams and Audit Committees that apply the Standards in a presence-or-absence manner and those that apply them in a more probing way; and (2) between teams that apply the Standards in a presence-or-absence way.

In summary, the evidence shows that each assumption underlying the assertion that NCATE accreditation represents a stamp of minimum quality is invalid. It is now appropriate to examine in greater depth the variation in programs accredited by NCATE.
CHAPTER 6

PROGRAMS ACCREDITED THAT SHOULD BE DENIED

The principal result of the dominance of the presence-or-absence approach is wide variation in the quality of programs accredited by NCATE. The extent of variation is such that some programs get accredited with problems as severe as those denied accreditation. In short, one must question whether NCATE's stamp of approval represents a guarantee of minimum quality.

Table 1 summarizes the issue. One would expect programs that pass NCATE's Standards to be accredited (the • below) and those that fail to be denied (the • below). When programs pass but evidence suggests Standards have not been met, a serious question arises (the X below).

Table 1

Variation in Programs Accredited by NCATE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standards Met</th>
<th>Standards Not Met</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accredited</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denied</td>
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</tr>
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108
This chapter uses three kinds of evidence to document that the latter does occur—that programs not meeting Standards are accredited:

- Observation of Visiting Teams and Audit Committees. (Teams were observed during their Sunday orientation meetings and Monday and Tuesday consensus sessions; members responsible for evaluating the Curricula "family" at the basic level were observed for each team.);

- Reports to university officials at one institution from two separate panels commissioned to investigate the quality of graduate programs in the School of Education and the university at large (reports available to the team, but never used during evaluation of the schools' programs); and

- Interviews with NCATE headquarter staff, team members, and institutions.

1. Variation in the Curricula "Family" in Programs Accredited by NCATE

Programs accredited by NCATE differed widely in their performance on Standard 2.1 (Design of Curricula). It will be recalled that this Standard requires those responsible for a program to define the roles they expect graduates to perform once they enter the teaching world, to develop explicit objectives to ensure that graduates are able to fill these roles competently, and to structure courses and field experiences in such a way that these objectives are accomplished.

One department defined four roles for a teacher: (1) as a person; (2) as a director of learning; (3) as an interactor with students; and (4) as a person with professional responsibilities and relationships.\(^1\) The department then defined the quality indicator "explicit" to mean performance objectives at the department level. Each course and field experience program was then reviewed to ensure that its content was related to departmental performance objectives.\(^2\) In presenting the
curriculum design to the NCATE team (in the Institutional Report) and to students (in a handbook), department officials indicated how each course addressed each performance objective. For example, under the role "Teacher as a Director of Learning" for the area of curriculum/content, officials identified twenty-five departmental performance objectives and listed for each the relevant course(s), underlining those with primary emphasis on that objective. Ten objectives are presented below to illustrate this approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Objective</th>
<th>Courses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Performance Objective)</td>
<td>(Courses)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. The teacher as a director of learning

The prospective teacher will:

A. In the area of curriculum/content:

1) demonstrate adequate preparation in the content areas.  

2) describe in detail teaching procedures of major importance in the discipline or content area.  

3) critique and summarize articles from appropriate professional journals.  

4) compare the characteristics of a "modern math" curriculum with a more traditional/computational math curriculum.  
   El.Curr.

5) present convincing arguments for teaching the metric system.  
   El.Curr.

6) present evidence to support the statement that language arts is at the center of all elementary school learning and thus should be taught both as a separate skill subject and as an integrated subject.  
7) write characteristics that distinguish a social studies conceptual approach curriculum from a social studies content approach curriculum. El.Curr.

8) explain the difference between the process and the product approach in teaching science. Ed.Psy.,El.Curr.

9) define and give examples of the primary processes of science. El.Curr.

10) demonstrate that all major disciplines of the natural sciences are an integral part of the elementary school science curriculum. El.Curr.

Team members responsible for this Standard accepted the school's definition of "explicit." They validated the process used by the department. In so doing, they found that course outlines described the performance objectives in greater detail and, through interviews, that each faculty member could explain how his/her course accomplished the objective(s). Team members also found widespread awareness among students of the competencies that were expected and the courses that would develop the competencies. In short, team members found that the program demonstrated compliance with NCATE's requirements in both the "Preamble" and the "Standards."

A second department described the teacher's role as necessitating competencies in four areas: (1) subject matter; (2) instructional techniques; (3) application of learning theory in multicultural settings; and (4) interpersonal skills.\textsuperscript{4} When team members asked if the department had fleshed out this description in any way, they were referred to the Handbook on Student Teaching, which simply restated the four areas and added two more.\textsuperscript{5} Neither the department nor the team
sought to operationalize the term "explicit." Instead, both avoided it, and under the press of time (the institution had provided a 27-page Institutional Report), team members accepted the existence of general goal statements as sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with the (summary) Standards. One team member responsible for elementary programs did so with great reluctance, however, for she believed the quality indicator should have been applied.

I never did find the performance objectives I was looking for. I did find in a college handbook six general objectives. I had a lot of work to do on other Standards and everyone seemed to feel that this was enough evidence, so I just decided to go ahead and approve it.\textsuperscript{6}

Variation on this Standard was found not only among institutions, but also among programs at a single institution. One team to a large institution with many programs approved objectives for the early childhood education program as detailed as the ones described previously; however, the team also approved ten general program objectives for the health education program although the department had neither defined the objectives further nor shown how courses related to objectives.\textsuperscript{7}

Standard 2.1.1, Multicultural Education, a subcomponent of Design of Curricula component, prescribes a specific content area that must be covered in the curriculum of every teacher education program. It requires evidence that (1) students are prepared in national and international dimensions of culturally diverse environments; (2) students receive instruction and experience in multicultural issues in courses, seminars,
directed readings, laboratory and clinical experiences, and practicum and other types of field experiences; and (3) officials responsible for the programs document both short-term strategies and ongoing assessments in this area as a reflection of a conscious intervention strategy.

One program did just that. It set out six objectives, which it then elaborated in some thirty course outlines and/or separate modules in the three programs presented for accreditation: secondary education, special education, and elementary education. Instructional and evaluation strategies also were identified for each module or course outline. In addition, the multicultural education emphasis was infused throughout the program, including media instruction and field experiences. Finally, the department had developed (through a federal grant) a Multicultural Learning Resource Center which linked the college to the community. Site visits to interview supervising teachers in the field showed they knew of the Center and had often used its resources to improve their own instruction.

In contrast, other teams, focusing on the italicized summary of the Standard, accepted any evidence of attention to this Standard. Moreover, they paid greatest attention to whether curriculum content dealt with the minority immediately in the vicinity of the institution. Thus, one team member responsible for secondary education programs reported that the area representative had described how multicultural
issues were included in different course offerings. She also reported that student teachers and supervisors had said, "We spend a lot of time on this."\(^9\) Another team deemed it sufficient that some courses covered such issues and that students were placed in multicultural settings for their practicum experience.\(^10\)

Finally, for one institution NCATE did not even learn whether minimum requirements were met.\(^11\) On the basis of an incomplete Institutional Report, a state representative from the Teacher's Association with no NCATE training (who received a copy of the NCATE Standards only a day before the visit) investigated this requirement for all nineteen programs in two hours. He led off one meeting with a class by asking:

> How do you feel about this Standard? What should I write? What experiences have you had here at the university that would be beneficial to your work?\(^12\)

The answers were positive. A review of the Institutional Report shows the paucity of data on which this team member based his recommendation to approve compliance with the Standard. Consistently, the section on sources of data listed the following identical sources for all nineteen programs (basic and advanced), even though some sources were irrelevant for advanced programs: transcripts of students (four or five randomly selected); syllabus for course 366, Foundations of Education; and the Equal Opportunity General Policy Statement.\(^13\)

Standard 2.3.4 (Practicum), in the summary part of the Standard, requires "...direct, substantial, quality participation in training over an extended period of time..." under the supervision of well-qualified college and school personnel.\(^14\) According to the Preamble, officials
must show they meet this general requirement in the following ways:

- The student has tested and reconstructed the theory s/he has developed;

- The student has assumed major responsibility for the full range of teaching during the practicum experience over an extended period of time;

- The student was supervised by college personnel who themselves have had experience with elementary and secondary teaching and have been involved with schools in an ongoing way;

- The student was supervised by experienced, certificated personnel from the cooperating schools;

- The school personnel has been screened and selected according to explicit criteria;

- The institution has selected the cooperating schools and has shown it has developed effective working relationships with such schools.¹⁵

While these "Preamble" requirements need to be elaborated on if they are to be applied effectively and consistently, their application at least will reveal major areas of strengths and weaknesses. That is what happened in one case; in another (when only the "Standard" was applied), major weaknesses were missed. Yet, in both cases the Standard was judged met in all programs by both the teams and the Audit Committees.

The first institution required two semesters of practicum experience in two different socioeconomic school settings.¹⁶ Master teachers were recruited from the school district to teach methods courses and to assist in supervising the practicum (teachers competed for these positions, which were funded jointly by the school district and the school). Methods courses were taught in the school buildings, as
were the seminars students were required to take during their practicum. This school-based arrangement provided students with maximum supervision and opportunity to discuss problems as they arose. College teachers worked with the master teachers and classroom teachers in assisting the practicum students. The school had systematic methods for providing student teachers with feedback on their classroom performance and for evaluating overall performance at specific points in the practicum cycle.

Teachers and administrators alike gave high praise to the system and the competent teachers it produced.

In contrast, the second institution arranged its practicum to give the classroom teacher almost complete autonomy. It had no control over the placement of students (it presented a list of students to the school district, which forwarded it to teachers, who in turn interviewed and chose students they wanted). The length of the practicum varied from ten to sixteen weeks, depending on the crop planting season. No attempts were made to provide for varied practicum experiences in different socio-economic settings. No specific program existed for training cooperating teachers in how to supervise practicum students, and criteria for selecting cooperating teachers were unspecified.

The school justified this arrangement on the grounds that primary responsibility for a good experience rests with the supervising teacher in the classroom. College involvement, it thought, is best limited to giving assistance to the classroom teacher, not the student. To underscore this role, college personnel who gave this assistance were called "University Consultants." According to the director of the
Office of Student Teaching, University Consultants were to "spend a lot of time helping the regular teacher be a good supervisor." In reply to the question,"Do student teachers have to write lesson plans?", the director explained, "We don't ask the question that way. We ask, 'What does the classroom teacher want?' We back what the teacher wants. If our consultant wants lesson plans and the teacher doesn't, the teacher wins or there is a meeting of the minds."\[^{19}\]

Interviews with cooperating teachers revealed surprise—even amazement—that such an arrangement existed. One teacher with nine years of experience stated the biggest shortcoming of the practicum in the following way:

There is not enough university observation of student teaching to be able to criticize the students effectively. They don't even provide us with instructions on how to criticize.\[^{20}\]

Students were vocal in their criticism of the field experience, but their criticisms soon spilled over to the entire program. Education courses were branded as "worthless, a waste of time." Teachers were accused of having little contact with the real world of the classroom. University Consultants were seen as "compassionate," but of no help in refining techniques or in correcting mistakes. To a chorus of "yeses" and "that's rights," one student summed up the group's feeling when he said, "They can throw it all out."\[^{21}\]

Existence of so many weaknesses for the practicum at this second school raises the question of whether the presence-or-absence approach always catches inferior programs. In this case, it
did not. But one needs to consider the dynamics of this team visit. The institution had presented an incomplete Institutional Report. The team chairperson had requested additional information from the school before the team arrived, but never received it. Team members responsible for this Standard had many other Standards to evaluate. This meant that while each discovered a part of the problem, the pieces could come together only if they shared information—and this never occurred.

Not only was there wide variation among programs in performance on the Curricula Standards; there was also evidence on entire programs that raised substantial questions about performance on a range of Standards—but this evidence was never considered, by either the team or the Audit Committee.

2. Evidence Never Considered

On February 28, 1980, barely six weeks before arrival of the NCATE team, university officials at one large school received the evaluation report of a "Blue Ribbon" panel on the performance of a major graduate program in the College of Education. The report documented major weaknesses in four of the six areas covered by NCATE Standards: Governance, Curricula, Faculty, and Students. Portions of the report, organized by NCATE categories, are presented below:

Governance

...the proliferation of organization and entities within the University, each with its own self-perceived structure, functions and responsibilities, and each with its own limited decision-making power, produces an unusual degree of overlapping of operations, ambiguity of policy formulation, and confusion about the decision-making process.
Curricula

Three members of the Panel, after reviewing numerous dissertations, came to the following general consensus with respect to the following criteria:

a. **Choice of Problem:** Often lacking in significance, generally focused on a very local setting and [sic] which might not have national or international application.

b. **Research Design and Method:** Usually a single research method was used and most often a questionnaire was the instrument. In some cases, the research could be described more accurately as an opinion poll than a scholarly research undertaking.

c. **Treatment of Data:** In some studies, the collected data were listed or recorded without much analysis or interpretation.

d. **Literature Search and Review:** In some of the studies, there was little analysis, classification, criticism or interpretation of the literature dealing with the subject. In a case or two, the review of the literature seemed to end with articles published at least a decade ago.

e. **Significance and Intellectual Rigor:** The Panel was impressed with a few of the dissertations read. However, it agreed that the general level of significance and demonstrated intellectual rigor, as made manifest in the dissertations, was not high.  

Faculty

Overload

Whether members of the Department attempt to direct the research of too many graduate students and serve on too many committees must be considered in relationship to a number of other responsibilities assumed as well as the defined maximum loads set by the University. Size of teaching loads on campus, off-campus teaching and consulting obligations assumed, undergraduate and graduate student advisement, personal research and publication, faculty committee work—all are activities which take time and energy. Overloads may be carried for short periods of time by individual professors without the deficits in professional services becoming obvious. But
a department which allows most of its members to carry heavy overloads, with or without extra remuneration, soon become suspect of giving too little attention to quality.

The weight of evidence, in the judgment of the Panel, clearly indicates that [department] faculty continue to assume an unreasonably heavy graduate student advisement load, a situation which is exacerbated by overly-ambitious involvement in all types of off-campus outreach activities and a self-determined definition of departmental role and scope which is too broad and inclusive.25

In-Breeding

Among most institutions of higher education, excessive faculty in-breeding is viewed as a threat to quality. An institution which staffs its departments with its own graduates promotes a kind of discipleship in which a few major professors have undue influence over proteges whose graduate work they supervise [sic]. Additionally, for a university without strong research traditions to employ its own graduates to direct the research of graduate students may create a situation in which weakness begets weakness.

In the University of __________, over 30 percent of the faculty previously were awarded one or more degrees from that institution. In 1978-79, for the College of Education, the percentage of faculty at the Professor or Associate Professor ranks holding [university] degrees was about 50 percent. Three out of five members of the faculty of the Department of __________ (this year, 1979-80) received either the doctorate or master's degree from the University of __________.26

Standards for Courses

Standards for courses are normally determined, in part, by the time which those enrolled can devote to course requirements—reading, research, preparation of papers, extra discussion sessions with professors and peers, conferences with professors, and preparation for and taking examinations. Course work loads of many students in the doctoral program of the Department are too heavy, and length of degree programs are too short, to convince members of the Panel that high quality graduate work is the norm. Teachers and administrators who are employed full time in a school system often drive as much as a hundred miles each way, two or three nights a week, to
take campus courses during the regular academic year. Some commute, also, during the summer periods. If the students are giving full measure on their jobs or to home responsibilities, they obviously are attempting to take graduate courses and write dissertations on the fringes of their time and energy. Inasmuch as most good graduate schools endeavor not to allow a student who is employed full-time to take more than one class a quarter, this type of overload of a student, it is suggested, cannot help but lower the standards professors can maintain in their classes.

The Panel examined the grade reports for two terms from eighteen departments in graduate-level courses designated 500-599, 600-699, and 700-up. The following table shows the distribution of a total of over 6,000 individual grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>500-599</th>
<th>600-699</th>
<th>700-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A's</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B's</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C's</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below C</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even within this restricted range, there was an apparent wide diversity of grade patterns among departments. For instance, one department submitting a total of 922 grades in graduate credit courses during the same two terms showed the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>500-599</th>
<th>600-699</th>
<th>700-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A's</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B's</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C's</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below C</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A casual review of grade reports in individual courses showed an even greater diversity. It appears that in some courses the "A" grade is standard for all students.

The Panel recognizes the problem of grading, particularly at the graduate level. It does, however, submit that if
a grading system is used, it should have meaning and should be applied in an objective manner. It con-
cludes that graduate grades at _________ [univer-
sity] considering the mix of students, are abnormally high, have little relative meaning and, in many cases, are not indicative of levels of quality of performance.27

Students

Graduate Record Examination scores of students in _________ [department] are in the lower fourth when compared with other departments of the University, and are below the national mean; but they are not at the bottom, and scores do reflect to some extent a higher population of minority and foreign students than in most other departments.

Testimony was received from professors outside _________ [department], several from arts and sciences, who have served on doctoral committees, in support of the quality of students in the Department. Their feelings could be summed up as "The Department takes reasonably good students but fails to challenge them to do rigorous work."

The proportion of international and minority students in the program is high.

The Department espouses a special commitment to serving the needs of minority and international graduate students who have traditionally been underserved. However, this commitment has, in some instances, blurred the need for rigor and balance in the Department. There is also evidence that this goal and objective of the Department is not clearly understood or supported by the entire University community.28

The findings in these four areas were "new" to university officials in only one sense: they focused principally on the performance of one department in the College of Education. A report with similar findings for all graduate programs, commissioned by the regional accrediting agency, had been received only two months earlier. In addition to documenting program weaknesses in the four Standard areas described above for all graduate programs at this university, it also
presented evidence that a fifth area of NCATE Standards, Facilities, was inadequate for many programs. While this report dealt with the entire graduate program, it concluded that the most significant problems were in the School of Education:

...If graduate education is to be strengthened at [university], then a major portion of such an effort must be directed to strengthening the College of Education, where the majority, or a wide margin, of the doctoral students study.  

During the NCATE team visit, five team members were responsible for the four families (including nineteen component and subcomponent Standards) identified in these two reports having major weaknesses. For the program singled out by the first-mentioned report, only two Standards were found to be not met (2.2, Content, because no provision was made for humanistic and behavioral studies, and 3.3, Conditions for Faculty Service, because of faculty overload). At the June 1980 Council meeting, the program was accredited. How did this happen? One possibility is that significant changes had been made during the six weeks between release of the first-mentioned report and the team visit. Thus, perhaps those responsible for evaluating this program found the problems corrected. This is unlikely since the university president had directed task forces be set up to study most areas to report back during the summer or fall of 1980.

A second possibility is that the problems were not as serious as alleged. Yet the university president and the chairman of the Board of Trustees had endorsed the findings of both reports and pledged support for change.
The best explanation comes from observation of the team visit. With too much to look at and not enough time to do the looking, team members "satisficed" at a presence-or-absence level and accepted any claim that a task or function was performed at all. Interviews with team members responsible for evaluating these Standards for this program showed that only one of the five had even looked at both reports. This one stated that "it played no role in my research, since I skimmed it after I had gathered my data." (Another said he had looked briefly at the regional accrediting agency report but had not used its findings in his research.) All team members cited the press of time and their many responsibilities in other program areas as their reasons for not reading the two reports. (It should be noted that the chairperson had called the entire team's attention to the reports during the Sunday and Monday night sessions and requested each member to read them.) In this case, substantial evidence of problems acknowledged as accurate by university officials was available but never used. Had team members used such evidence, they might have asked more pointed questions, not only about this particular program, but about programs in general at this school of education.*

3. Evidence from NCATE Staff, NCATE Team Members, and Institutional Representatives that Inferior Programs are Accredited

After studying programs denied NCATE accreditation during 1979, NCATE's Director noted that:

*While the Council accredited the program that was the focus of the "Blue Ribbon" Panel report, in-depth review of the team's findings by an Audit Committee did lead to the recommendation that a different program be denied at the basic and advanced levels. Extensive Council discussion resulted in approval of this recommendation and in denial of a second program at both the basic and advanced levels. The school had submitted four programs at the basic level and twelve at the advanced level.
Whether because the Council tends to focus attention on certain Standards more than others, whether programs tend to have the same weaknesses, or a combination of these factors, certain Standards were found weak significantly more often than others.35

The four Standards most frequently cited in denial of programs were Governance (1), Evaluation and Planning (6.1 and 6.2), and the Practicum Experience (2.3.4). (Table 2 shows the frequency of weaknesses in those Standards where programs were denied.)

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Number of Times of Weaknesses Cited</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Programs Cited</th>
<th>Number of Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (Gov.)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1 (Eval. Grad.)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3.4 (Practicum)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2 (Use of Eval.)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3.3 (Clin. Exp.)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.1 (Dsgn. of Curr.)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.3 (Cond. Fac. Serv.)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.4 (Cond. Fac. Dev.)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>2.5 (Stud. Part.)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>5.2 (Nat. &amp; Media Ctr.)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.2 (Retention Stud.)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.1 (Admission)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>3.5 (Pt.-time Fac.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>5.3 (Facilities &amp; Res.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


At one school observed for this research, the K-12 program failed two of those four Standards—Governance (1) and Evaluation (6.1)—plus a third, Design of Curricula (2.1) ranked sixth; see table. The program

125
was denied accreditation. At a second institution, also observed for this research, the K-12 program failed the top four ranked Standards and was accredited. In both programs, teams found numerous weaknesses in other Standards, and only a few strengths. The events that led to these two decisions illustrate the dynamics of the accreditation process at the Audit Committee and Council levels and show clearly the consequences of the presence-or-absence approach for programs accredited by NCATE.

In the first case, the Audit Committee originally recommended approval, but was reversed by the Council; in the second, the Audit Committee recommended approval and was sustained by the Council. In the first, the Audit Committee devoted considerable time to the K-12 program as well as the other eighteen programs submitted by the school for accreditation. The committee, described earlier in this report, consisted of only two members. From the outset, the two were deadlocked, one arguing to accredit all programs that had failed only three Standards and the other pushing to deny many on the basis of the particular Standards not met and their effects on the overall quality of that program. In the end they reached a political compromise: programs failing four or more "critical" Standards would be denied, while those failing three or fewer "critical" Standards would be approved. When the Audit Committee chairperson described to the Council the rationale for recommending denial to only one program at the basic level, several Council members began asking questions. They wondered why the K-12 program had been recommended for accreditation since it
had failed the Governance Standard, in their eyes a very important one. The final decision was to amend the recommendation and also deny accreditation to the K-12 program, principally because in addition to failing two other "critical" Standards, it had failed the Governance Standard. In short, on the basis of perceptions of the implications of failing the Governance Standard for the entire K-12 program, the Council voted to deny accreditation.\(^{36}\)

In contrast, the Audit Committee that reviewed the K-12 program at the second school used the presence-or-absence approach. It was on this committee that one member spent the entire time filling out forms on a previous discussion and did not participate in deliberations. The other two members skimmed the sixteen programs presented for accreditation, including the K-12 program, and recommended accreditation for all. The Council simply ratified their recommendation.\(^{37}\)

NCATE headquarters staff were surprised at the result at the second institution, since failure to meet the top four Standards (see Table 2) generally leads to denial. When asked about the disparity between the two decisions, one senior official simply threw up his hands and said, "The Council blew it, that's all."\(^{38}\) Some effort to salvage the situation was made in the Action Letter to the institution which stressed the Council's concern for the university's governance structure (but which also overstated the time the Council/Audit Committee had spent reviewing the programs):

> The Council spent an exceptional amount of time reviewing programs by [institution]. Council members were particularly concerned with
violations of the Governance Standard, with a lack of appropriate preparation on scholarly activity on behalf of several faculty members, and with the general absence of a systematic program for evaluating the performance of program graduates. Although program strengths were found to outweigh weaknesses, in the future the institution will undoubtedly wish to take appropriate measures to reduce those deficiencies cited.\textsuperscript{39}

In Part III, this institution's response to NCATE's concerns will be discussed. At this point it is sufficient to note that a program was accredited that had more serious deficiencies than a program that was denied, and that experienced observers of the NCATE process felt a mistake had been made.

Team members also expressed concern over the quality of the programs they reviewed. For the institution that provided NCATE with a 27-page Institutional Report, the team spent the entire time reconstructing what the program was, rather than evaluating how well it performed according to NCATE Standards. Nevertheless, team members left the campus with grave reservations about the quality of the programs they had seen. Post-interviews with team members representing higher education and practitioners revealed a consensus. As one put it:

\textit{I think the graduates are marginal. I just don't think they get enough theory. The experience they get observing teachers is good, but if a doctor is going to take out my appendix, I want him to know what he is doing, what he is going to see after he opens me up. I don't think he can just watch three operations and do a good job.}\textsuperscript{40}

Another team member reported:

\textit{I feel uneasy about the quality of their graduates. I feel they are short on content. These people are going to be a part of my profession, and I'm not sure I like what I see. They've got a marginal program.}\textsuperscript{41}
Finally, it should be remembered that institutional representatives from three schools (see page 91) reported that NCATE teams missed one or more programs having numerous weaknesses, in their eyes.

In summary, this chapter has used three forms of evidence to show that the presence-or-absence approach leads to wide variation in quality and programs accredited by NCATE: observation of Visiting Team and Audit Committee application of the Curricula family; reports from two non-NCATE panels that were never used by team members; and interview data from participants in the NCATE process. The result is that one must question whether NCATE's stamp of approval represents a guarantee of minimum quality. NCATE appears to "regulate" some, but not all, of the inferior programs it reviews.

What about the affects of NCATE accreditation on a program? Do those that are accredited make changes in response to identification of weaknesses? Do those denied accreditation change? Do they ignore NCATE? These questions are answered in Part III.
PART III

THE EFFECT OF NCATE ACCREDITATION ON PROGRAMS IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
INTRODUCTION

Parts I and II demonstrated that the presence-or-absence approach has certain consequences: numerous requirements in the Standards are neither investigated nor evaluated, and major problem areas in entire programs are sometimes missed. NCATE's accreditation process is like taking a snapshot that captures only a part of the object being photographed.

Despite this serious limitation, it is still important to know how institutions respond to NCATE. NCATE may make a difference—if institutions improve their programs. Thus, the central question becomes: Is there evidence that institutions have changed programs in areas identified as weak by NCATE?

In fact, there is—enough to support the judgment that NCATE makes a very limited difference.

Chapters 7 and 8 provide evidence for this conclusion. They show that: (1) for programs accredited by NCATE, changes occur in some, but not all, of the areas NCATE identifies as weak (e.g., Standards not met); and (2) for programs denied accreditation, either substantial change occurs or nothing happens.

Underlying each set of findings is a simple reality: The central administration of an institution (the President, Vice-President, and Provost) and the administrators of its professional education programs
(e.g., the Dean and/or chairpersons) determine the scope and limits of change. They have the power; they determine what the institution does.

For programs accredited by NCATE, those immediately responsible (e.g., Dean and/or chairperson) decide which weaknesses to address. While NCATE has determined that each Standard judged not met represents a serious weakness in the quality of a program, program officials choose only certain weaknesses to address. They do so on the basis of their definition of program quality, which may differ from NCATE's. NCATE's findings, in other words, become a resource for addressing problems on their agenda. (Since NCATE's approach to accreditation uncovers most of the worst problems, these problems generally are not unknown to the responsible parties and in most cases represent long-standing difficulties.) Change may follow administrative action directly at the program level; or, where additional resources (e.g., funds for additional staff or delegation of authority for governance issues) are required, change may be the result of central administration approval. In either case, areas selected for change come from NCATE's list. Thus, NCATE, as a resource for change, makes a difference.

For programs denied accreditation, the same process occurs, but with two added dimensions. First, more problems are identified, so change, if and when it comes, occurs on a larger scale. Second, as a result of denial, other levers of power with more potential than NCATE for affecting enrollment at the institution (and in the professional
education program in particular), enter the picture and influence the outcome in an important way. (Such levers of power include, among others, legislative action, regulatory powers of state departments of education, competition from neighboring institutions, and support from alumni). In fact, when change occurs, it typically is directed more toward these levers of powers than toward NCATE, in an effort to minimize any negative effect on student enrollment. For those in the institution seeking change, NCATE's findings again serve as a resource, generally for some hard bargaining with the central administration. In contrast with its effect on programs, NCATE's influence on programs denied accreditation is more indirect, owing to pressure from these other levers of power.

It is important at this point to clarify the terms "direct influence," and "indirect influence." Direct influence refers to NCATE's involvement with an institution as the result of the Visiting Team's findings or the Council's decision. Indirect influence refers to NCATE's role as a trigger for the involvement of other levers of power. One form of influence occurs within the institution, the other as a result of pressure from organizations outside the institution. NCATE's direct influence was found to be weaker than its indirect influence, owing to the weakness of its major resource (professional reputation), when compared with the legal or economic power exercised by outside levers of power. Only when NCATE's potential sanction of negative publicity was used did NCATE's leverage increase as the result of institutional concern for its reputation or its concern that other levers
of power might become involved. Table 1 below shows these relationships.

Table 1

**NCATE's Influence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inner Environment</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Levers of Power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Environment</td>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>(Publicity as Trigger)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These conclusions rest on two sets of data: observation of NCATE’s accreditation process for eight institutions presenting programs during the academic year 1980-81 and a random sample of institutions where NCATE denied accreditation to one or more programs between 1974 and 1978.

For the eight institutions observed for this research, the following methods were used to learn of changes: (1) institution officials were interviewed during the team visit to learn how they had conducted the self-study in preparation for the visit and what changes already had been made as a result; (2) institution officials were interviewed by telephone after the visit to learn what changes had resulted from the visit; and (3) two additional rounds of telephone follow-up
interviews were conducted after the Council's decision to grant or deny accreditation to learn of any additional changes.

From the seventy-seven institutions with one or more programs denied accreditation between 1974 and 1978, twenty-one were randomly selected for follow-up. The sample was stratified according to: (1) level of degree presented for accreditation (B.A.; B.A., Specialist; B.A., Specialist, Doctorate); (2) type of institution (public or private); and (3) status of NCATE accreditation (institutions still having NCATE-accredited programs and those not). Since the size of an institution generally matched the level of degree presented for accreditation, this variable was covered under that category.

Results are reported as though a simple random sample had been drawn. That is, if something were true of eight of the twenty-one schools in the sample, it is presented as if that same phenomenon were true in about 38 percent of the schools in the population. Since the stratifying variables were found to have little relationship to the results of the study, this simplification produces only small distortions in the results. Sampling procedures and data are presented in Appendix B.¹

For each institution, relevant materials on file at NCATE headquarters were studied and then at least four interviews were conducted, three with officials at the institution (central administrative staff, department officials, and department faculty) and one with state department officials. This range of sources permitted a cross-check of information. Study of the most recent reports of state program approval
visits (supplied by state department officials) provided an additional check of information received about changes in programs.
CHAPTER 7

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT AND RESPONSE: EIGHT

SCHOOLS VISITED 1979-80

This chapter addresses the question: What changes occurred in the programs of the eight schools observed for this research? Before answering the question, it is necessary to examine the organizational context in which change occurs.

1. Organizational Context

Programs of professional education exist as part of a larger complex organization, a college or university. Along with other programs, they compete for scarce resources. Since the central administration (President, Vice-President, and Provost, among others) is responsible for securing and allocating resources among respective programs, maintenance of the organization, including the quality of its programs, falls on that group's shoulders. In the end, they are the ones who give the green light to major reforms, because they are the ones ultimately accountable for the health of the organization.

Professional education programs, like other programs, also have power. Their power derives from their size (relative to other programs), reputation, and involvement with outside funding sources (Federal, state, and private); from this base those directly responsible for the programs (e.g., Dean and/or chairpersons) can influence decisions.
by central administrators.

Within this system, there are strong pressures for the actors to develop stable relationships with one another, but enduring stability is elusive because no organization is immune from its outer environment. Forces outside the institution influence relationships between central administrators and program officials by affecting enrollment and program content.

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Enrollment is the primary concern of central administrators.

It represents the life blood of the institution. Without students, there is no tuition. Without tuition, there are no programs. Since it is from enrollment that resources flow, either directly from students or indirectly from Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) formulas funded by state legislatures, central administrators are sensitive to forces that can affect enrollment figures. Just as they seek stable relationships with program officials inside the institution, central administrators try to develop similar relationships with forces outside the institution. The purpose is to minimize disruption to enrollment figures so the organization can be maintained and its programs ultimately enhanced.

---

Officials at the program level also recognize the importance of enrollment. Bargaining positions are enhanced or diminished depending on the size (i.e., enrollment) of the program. Since size can be affected by content and since most of these same forces outside the institution also seek to influence program content, managing these relationships from the program perspective becomes the central task of administrators at this level. Figure 1 shows the focus of each level
of administration with respect to these outside forces, or levers of power.

Figure 1

These levers of power vary greatly in the degree to which they can be managed. Since they are outside the organization, they have their own independent sources of power. Moreover, while all affect enrollment, they do so in different ways.

Some levers affect enrollment primarily. General demographic trends provide one example. When the number of college-age youth declines, central administrators adapt to shrinking enrollment with program changes. Alumni interest and activity also affect enrollments directly. This lever is especially important for private institutions, where alumni traditionally play an important role in student recruitment and in annual contributions to the institution's budget. Should alumni become dissatisfied with the content of programs offered by their alma mater, their involvement can lead to change.
Other levers affect program content primarily and enrollment secondarily. Some are relevant specifically to teacher training programs. State certification agencies, for example, provide the legal credentials needed by graduates to teach. In most states, certification is usually accomplished through program approval.* The state agency develops Standards and reviews programs according to these Standards. Once approved, graduates, after being recommended by the institution, are automatically certified to teach in that state. Where Standards are found not met, changes must be made if the program is to continue. Should a program be denied approval, its graduates are no longer eligible for certification, which means, for all intents and purposes, that the program has to close. In such cases, students already in the program may be allowed to complete their program of studies and be certified, but most will probably transfer to other institutions with approved programs.

Some graduates seek employment in other states. Thus, reciprocity arrangements between states are important to teacher education programs that typically send a high percentage of their graduates to other states. Organizations that facilitate such reciprocity agreements can influence program content in areas where comparability of content is needed to accomplish reciprocity.

Courts can affect program content and, thereby, enrollments, sometimes in dramatic ways. For example, a desegregation decision can, at a single stroke, move an entire teacher training program from one

*Most states also use individual transcript analysis for candidates who do not go through approved programs.
school to another as a part of a legal settlement, or responsibility for specific areas of concentration (e.g., special education, early childhood education, or elementary education) can be assigned to different schools to promote integration.

Legislatures can affect programs and thus enrollments by defining missions (research, training, or service), by modifying these missions (e.g., changing the status of a school), and by altering funding priorities.

The Federal government can affect enrollments by funding programs: "development grants" provide needed resources to some schools; special grants to create Multicultural Learning Centers enhance programs at other schools; funds for research and professional development help others maintain or upgrade their programs; funds for special education or bilingual programs serve to make the offerings of some institutions more attractive than others to prospective students. Federal requirements that institutions demonstrate a minimum level of quality as a condition for applying for funds, as well as requirements that programs demonstrate compliance with civil rights and program requirements, provide a sanction that can affect programs and enrollments should enforcement proceedings be initiated.

Finally, the recruiting strategies of neighboring schools can affect both program content and enrollments. "Keeping up with the Joneses" can lead to new programs being established; informally making available information about the difficulties of a sister institution can affect enrollments.

Each of these levers has a power base that rests on statutory
authority or economic reality. Each lever can affect enrollment in important ways. In contrast, NCATE's power base rests on professional authority. It cannot command that changes be made; it can only recommend and suggest. Such power rests on the willingness of those affected to accept NCATE's recommendations.

Such a power base is certainly important. Institutions are concerned about their professional reputation. Program quality is a critical marketing tool in competition for students. Moreover, it is a value deeply held by all organizations that produce products, including those who train teachers. As the only nationally recognized accrediting agency for teacher training programs, NCATE enjoys a strong sense of legitimacy as an evaluator of program quality.

Interviews for this study with institutional officials clearly demonstrate this point. As one department chairperson said:

> Our institution is committed to excellence. Whenever the college has a chance to show it can measure up, it likes to do it. NCATE's authority rests on our belief that their evaluators can provide some special insight into what a quality program means. Their national perspective is what we want to hear and that's why we seek NCATE accreditation.

But there is a difference between "wanting to hear" and "having to listen." A college president put his finger on the difference when he said:

> NCATE accreditation is a plume on our hat. Icing on our cake. It represents our commitment to go beyond the minimum requirements demanded by our state agency. But we can exist just fine without NCATE. We have to respond to the power of the state agency; we don't have to respond to NCATE. If we respond to NCATE, it is because we think it improves the quality of our program. [Emphasis added]
While NCATE's ultimate power rests on a base of professional authority, however, its authority is supplemented by a number of side benefits it provides institutions, side benefits that could encourage them to take NCATE's recommendations even more seriously than they otherwise might since they are directly related to enrollment.

Publicity, reciprocity arrangements, eligibility for Federal funds, and employment requirements are four such benefits. All could affect enrollments in significant ways, but at present their impact is weak.

Institutions are concerned about their reputation. Therefore, publicity represents a potentially powerful tool for encouraging change. According to prevailing practice, however, institutions are free to advertise NCATE accreditation in their literature to attract students, but NCATE is restricted in the information it can provide about an institution's accreditation status should it lose accreditation. NCATE's present policy is that information about schools denied accreditation can be released only under limited conditions. The public can learn if a program has been denied by: (1) asking the institution; (2) examining NCATE's Annual List (which lists programs accredited); or (3) calling NCATE headquarters. In the latter case, information about a denial can be given out only if the institution has decided not to appeal the denial, or has appealed and lost. Moreover, strengths and weaknesses can only be released by the institution. Thus, while NCATE accreditation may help a school somewhat in its recruitment efforts, loss of accreditation does not represent a major publicity problem.*

*As the following pages show, however, when NCATE's findings are publicized, greater attention is paid to weaknesses it has identified.
During the 1950s through the early 1970s, NCATE accreditation greatly facilitated interstate reciprocity. Most states would automatically grant teaching certificates to teachers from other states if they had graduated from an NCATE-accredited school. With the growth of state interest in reviewing programs for certification, however, a number of other avenues for facilitating reciprocity have sprung up. State directors of certification, for example, now have two systems in operation—-one voluntary (the NASDTEC system) and one legally binding (the Interstate Certification Project). While some states continue to grant certification to graduates of NCATE-accredited schools from other states, certification by the NCATE route is now usually only one of several possible avenues.

Eligibility for Federal funds requires accreditation by a recognized accrediting agency. The U.S. Department of Education recognizes NCATE as the sole agency for accrediting teacher training programs. But it also recognizes regional accrediting agencies which accredit institutions housing teacher training programs. Since a teacher training program is eligible for Federal funds if its institution is accredited by a regional agency, NCATE accreditation is not needed before applying.*

Finally, while some local school districts have discussed the possibility of requiring candidates for teaching positions to come

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*In addition, NCATE officials are sometimes contacted by Federal agencies and foundations for their opinions of a school before a grant award is made. What effect this informal contact has on the final award of grants cannot be documented, only that it sometimes occurs.
from NCATE-accredited schools, efforts to implement such requirements have been confined to a handful of schools, with mixed results.\textsuperscript{5}

In summary, while there are side benefits for those who receive NCATE accreditation, the benefits are marginal in terms of helping or hurting student recruitment. The loss, threatened or actual, of these benefits to programs, given prevailing practices, does not pose serious consequences for an institution. Should it choose to ignore NCATE's findings, an institution may experience some professional embarrassment—but it does not face extinction. An institution may decide to modify its program out of a sense of professional responsibility. But the direction it will take is its to decide, given the nature of NCATE's power base and weak side benefits.

In the pages that follow, it is shown that some changes are made to improve program quality on the basis of NCATE's findings—but that more are made when other levers of power, levers that can affect enrollment, become involved. Program quality is important, but enrollment is more important, especially to central administrators who have the final say about resource allocation.

2. Changes in Programs Observed for this Research

What changes occurred in the programs of the eight schools observed for this research? To answer this question requires a look at the three points in the process where change could occur: during preparation of the Institutional Report, following the visit of the team, and following the Council's final Action Letter.
a. Preparation of the Institutional Report

The single most important phase of the accreditation process is the self-study. Those who know the program best, teacher education faculty, are to review their programs comprehensively and compare practice with requirements in the Standards. On the basis of this review, they prepare an Institutional Report, describing how each program meets the requirements of each Standard. The purpose of the effort is to uncover both strengths and weaknesses. It is expected that the institution will attempt to address any weaknesses before the team arrives in order to strengthen its case for accreditation. (The Council considers only actual practice at the time of the team visit, not changes or promised changes between the time of the visit and the Council meeting, because of the difficulty of verifying the effectiveness of such efforts.)

Only two of the eight institutions followed this process. For the rest, the process either broke down or was treated as an unpleasant task to be dispatched as quickly and painlessly as possible. Both schools that benefited from the self-study phase were small and privately supported. In contrast, all three large schools treated the process with disdain (and two of them turned in inferior Institutional Reports as well). This difference suggests a difference in perspective regarding the value of NCATE accreditation.

The two schools that followed the process as intended show there is no single "best" way to proceed. In one case, the department chairperson supervised teams that gathered data, which he then turned into draft chapters for their review and comment. In the second case,
a staff member with many years of experience in NCATE (he had served on eleven teams, chairing eight) was delegated the responsibility for both conducting the study and writing the report. In both cases changes beyond simply getting records and transcripts in shape occurred. For example, at the first school the objectives cited in Chapter 6 (pp. 109-111) as meeting Standard 2.1, Design of Curricula, were a direct outgrowth of the self-study process. The chairperson found no unified description of the roles the department expected students to perform once they entered the teaching world. He also found that specific course objectives were not clearly related to roles or to objectives in other courses. Considerable time and effort were spent clarifying these issues, with the result that the faculty and the chairperson emerged from the process feeling they knew what they were doing and why.⁶

The process also led to greater emphasis on using graduate feedback to make program changes in order to demonstrate compliance with the Evaluation and Planning family of Standards.⁷

In the second case, where a single individual conducted the study and wrote the report, important changes were also made before the team arrived. As a result of the self-study, he brought to the attention of the President a weak area in one program, which led to the hiring of a faculty member before the team arrived. In addition, modifications in membership on the schoolwide Teacher Education Committee were made to ensure that a majority of members had had public school experience. Finally, pressure was put on academic departments to revise their course offerings so as to address better the needs of prospective teachers.⁸
Some issues proved less tractable, however. In the case of the chairperson who used the team approach, when it became clear that few changes were going to occur in the K-12 music and art programs, he reported the existing situation in hopes that the NCATE team would investigate this area. He also documented weaknesses in the media center, an area of long-standing concern to the teacher education faculty.  

The result for both schools was the same: weak areas were identified, efforts were made to strengthen them, and in some cases change actually came about.

Two schools, again small, one private and one public, attempted comprehensive self-studies but experienced serious breakdowns. Both attempted to have committees conduct the research and write the reports, with the department chairperson or Dean acting in a supervisory capacity. As the deadline for submitting the reports drew near, it became increasingly clear that direct involvement by a single person was needed to bring closure to the studies. In one case a staff member assumed the responsibility; in the other, the Dean did. The result was that many problems were identified, but no attempts were made to correct them and they were not reported in the Institutional Report. At best, awareness among faculty about the programs they offered was heightened. As the Dean said:

At least we know more about our programs. We also know more about what each of us is doing.  

Otherwise, only records and transcripts were put in order.

The four remaining schools (three large and one small) never attempted a self-study as envisioned by NCATE. In all cases, weak
program or administrative support for NCATE accreditation contributed to this. Some schools, in fact, decided to seek reaccreditation (all schools already had NCATE accreditation) only a year before a reaccreditation visit would be necessary. Thus, lack of interest and a severe time press seriously affected the ability of those delegated responsibility for preparing the Institutional Report to identify weaknesses and promote change. In one case, a chairperson conducted the research and wrote the report over a summer, prior to a fall NCATE visit. He used "scraps of paper" submitted by colleagues to produce a 27-page Institutional Report, which, as noted earlier, failed to address two families of Standards. In a second case the person was instructed by the Dean to go to a neighboring institution and "copy their Institutional Report." She ignored this instruction and set about pulling together information for the report. She visited departments, enlisted help of supportive colleagues to secure needed data, and saw to it that faculty vitaes were retyped according to NCATE's format. When she discovered the institution and most departments lacked a systematic evaluation/feedback system, she suggested the school of education should begin immediately to develop such a system. She ignored the reply that she was "an emotional female" and "should just forget it" and persisted in efforts in this direction anyway. In addition, she succeeded in arranging a workshop for faculty on multicultural issues. (Only 10 percent of the faculty attended, however.) On her own, she gathered needed records and transcripts and put them in order for team use. In the third and fourth cases, the dedication of the person
assigned responsibility for completing the task did not match that described above, with the result that both institutions produced incomplete Institutional Reports. At one institution, a consultant was hired to work with the staff person, who was on loan from the Federal government; at the other, a person in the research division carried out the task.  

In summary, the self-study process can work, as two schools demonstrated. But it did not work very often. The prevailing pattern was one in which programs were described, not examined. Weaknesses were often identified but were not corrected. Incomplete Institutional Reports left teams with many holes to fill and little time to do the filling.

b. After the Visit

Except in cases where outside levers of power intervened, program staff were found to select among the weaknesses noted by NCATE and to choose the weaknesses they wanted to address on the basis of what they thought was best for the program. Weaknesses were selected from NCATE's list—an important finding—but program staff set the priorities and in the process ignored many areas of weakness cited by an NCATE team. They "wanted to hear" but did not feel they "had to listen" to what NCATE said. NCATE's findings became a resource for change, not a mandate for change.

Table 1 below shows the responses of institutions to weaknesses identified by NCATE teams. As can be seen, changes were made in only
13 percent of the weaknesses. Most of these changes were at two institutions. For an additional 23 percent of the weaknesses, changes were promised or proposed. No changes were made or planned for 64 percent of the weaknesses.

Table 1

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<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Made</th>
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</table>

**SOURCE:** Tabulations from visiting team reports and interviews with institutional representatives

Table 2 shows that institutions, when they proposed changes or actually made them, tended somewhat more often to address Standards found not met, rather than weaknesses identified (53 percent compared with 46 percent for weaknesses).

*Weaknesses were identified in the following way. Each team report was reviewed and weaknesses were tallied as they appeared. To illustrate, for a Standard such as Governance when it was applied at the institutional level and two weaknesses were identified for all programs, only two weaknesses were recorded. For teams that applied the Governance Standard at the department level and noted four weaknesses, one for each program, four weaknesses were recorded. Institutional responses were then reviewed in the same way to ensure consistency in tabulation.
Table 2

Changes in Standards Found Not Met By NCATE Visiting Teams, By Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
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<th>Change Proposed</th>
<th>Change Made</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>63</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PERCENT     | **47**    | **40**         | **13**      | **100** |

SOURCE: Tabulations from visiting team reports and interviews with institutional representatives.

Examples are now appropriate to illustrate the dynamics described earlier. Program officials follow a logical approach when reviewing Visiting Team findings. First, they sort out those they agree with from those they do not. Then they determine which can be acted on at their level and which need involvement of higher authorities (e.g., central administration, because additional resources are required to correct deficiencies). Then they weigh the political costs of taking action. Costs include consideration of whether the effort is worth it, whether the effort will succeed, or whether the effort is the right thing to do no matter what. But another consideration also plays a role. Judgments are made as to whether identified weaknesses are so serious that accreditation might be denied. If denial looms as a
serious possibility, then changes in more weaknesses of a more serious nature are considered. The emphasis shifts from responding to NCATE's findings solely out of professional pride to a combination that also includes concern over their reputation, should denial be publicized, and possible involvement of other levers of power that could affect enrollments. These points are demonstrated by comparing responses of schools that felt all their programs would be accredited with those that felt some would be denied.

1. Institutions that believed all programs would be accredited.

Officials at six institutions felt certain that team findings would lead to NCATE accreditation of all programs. After sorting out weaknesses they agreed with from those they did not and seeing which could be addressed at what level, they weighed the political costs of taking action. Outside levers of power did not affect their calculations because they felt certain accreditation would be granted.

At one small school, for example, the department chairperson reviewed the team's finding on the advising load of several faculty members and acted to redistribute advisees more equitably among all the staff. In response to a finding that students were receiving inadequate orientation in how to use the library, he saw to it that the content of three introductory courses was modified to include units on such skills. Through work study funds, he hired a student to go through the library's education book collection to weed out outdated books in response to another NCATE identified weakness.17

He also used the team's finding on faculty overload to request additional teaching staff. In response, central administrators
authorized two additional full-time faculty for the department. Following the team's visit he also received a reply to a memorandum written to the President several months before the visit requesting funds for renovation of a teacher education facility and for the curriculum laboratory. The President informed him that while funds for renovation were not available, space allocation plans for a new speech/drama building now included a place for the curriculum laboratory, which in turn would release space in the existing facility for additional classrooms.  

The chairperson did nothing, however, about two other areas noted as weaknesses by the team. In one case, where three Standards in the Evaluation and Planning family had been judged not met, the chairperson felt the department was doing enough and recommended no changes. In the second area (Practicum), where the team had noted the school had failed to develop any criteria for selecting supervising teachers, he also decided no action would be taken. While he agreed the finding represented a serious weakness, he pointed out that the school district had complete control over selecting supervising teachers and placing students for their practicum. As he put it:

We just turn over a list of students to the county with their areas of specialization. I saw that weakness as directed to the school board of [County], not me. There is nothing I could do about that one, even if I wanted to.

At one large university, the Dean of the School of Education, in response to the team's findings that many departments lacked program objectives, directed that such objectives be developed. However, he
declined to push for changes in the governance structure (another Standard found not met for many programs), since central administrators were opposed to any modification.\textsuperscript{20}

A vivid illustration of the selective process for one Standard is provided by the Dean's response at a second large school to the team's finding that the Media Standard had not been met. The team found at both the basic and advanced levels "no evidence of a systematic schoolwide program for the integration of modern instructional technologies into academic programs."\textsuperscript{21} Consistently, the team had found students aware of instructional technology courses but no record of their having taken one. In addition, interviews with students and faculty showed faculty use of media (as a role model) at a minimum. Instead of addressing these curricula weaknesses, the Dean approved the expenditure of $5,400 to the instructional technology department for additional equipment "...to help overcome the deficiencies noted in the Standard."\textsuperscript{22}

2. Institutions that believed some programs might be denied.

Two schools, one large and one small, followed the same steps in reaching a conclusion about how they should respond to team findings, but with one difference: weaknesses identified were so serious that it appeared accreditation might be denied. Since denial might trigger involvement of other levers of power, closer attention was paid to all the team's findings.

At the larger school, all programs at the basic and advanced levels were judged to have failed the Governance family, as well as
part of the Evaluation and Planning family. In addition, some programs
failed other Standards. Immediately following the team's Exit Report,
a staff person called a former NCATE Council member to learn what
the findings might mean and found there was barely a 40 percent chance
the Council would accredit programs with such serious weaknesses.23
Then, within a couple of days, a reporter from the local newspaper,
doing a story on the team's findings, called the Dean for information.
While the story never appeared (the Dean reported later he had killed
it),24 concern was clearly growing among program administrators.
The Dean decided he needed to inform the President, who,
according to one observer, "blew his stack when he heard there was a
slim chance for accreditation. He told the Dean, 'You will get accredi-
tation'."25 While the President did not know much about NCATE, he knew
one thing: he didn't need more trouble from legislators, "who were
always on his back."26 The institution, which happened to be the principal
university in the state, had always held accreditation. Now that other
universities in the state were getting accreditation, "we couldn't afford
not to be accredited," as one source put it.27 Institutional prestige
would suffer, and ultimately, enrollments would be affected.

Steps were taken immediately to review the Governance problem.
Program staff from the College of Health (which had programs in educa-
tion completely outside the control of the College of Education) were
brought into the Provost's office and told changes had to be made, "or
else we will lose NCATE accreditation."28 The Master in Arts and
Teaching (MAT) program was examined to see if ways could be devised to
bring it under more control by the College of Education (its programs also were completely outside the college). Departments were instructed to review additional NCATE findings to see where changes could be made.²⁹

Between December 1979 and February 1980, there was much activity. It ceased after the Council's decision, but this development is discussed later. At this point one need only note that the team's findings, coupled with the threat of denial which could trigger additional consequences, spurred the school to wrestle with a large number of weaknesses that required some hard bargaining between program staff and the central administration.

A second school, a small private school that had been evaluated in depth by the NCATE team, also feared for its accreditation. A principal concern was the team's finding that the Practicum Standard had not been met. While staff members agreed that weaknesses identified by the team regarding practices in the Teacher Center were accurate and that students were unable to try out different methods in the classroom during their field experience because of such practices, they did not agree with the team's finding that the Standard had not been met because, as one person put it:

We can't do anything about it. It's not our fault. We'd be out of business if we tried to change things because they don't have to take our students.³⁰

In addition, while faculty agreed that staff were overloaded (another team finding), they were reluctant to push the central administration on this issue, since there was no chance of getting any change.³¹ Thus,
the department set about justifying its situation in these areas as well as many others and produced a 75-page Institutional Rejoinder that was longer than the NCATE team report.

The school did, however, address some areas of long-standing weakness, and did so immediately. In judging the Media Standard not met, the team found the following weaknesses:

1. **An adequate materials center for teacher education is not maintained.** Faculty in the area expressed need for such a center; a proposal for such a center has been submitted as part of budget requests. Faculty have been acquiring materials with personal funds.

2. The Media Center is not open enough hours to meet teacher education needs. It is open less than eight hours and is not open evenings or weekends. Thus faculty have "learned to live with" limited hours and need for special preparations. There have been instances when films had to be stopped before conclusion because of Media Center time restraints.

3. Staffing patterns in the Media Center are inadequate to effectively support teacher education programs. Heavy theatre commitments severely limit accessibility of the Media Directors, especially in the Spring. Student aides have late afternoon commitments which force closing of the Center before 5:00 P.M. Aides are left to run the Center alone a large percentage of the time; thus, no professional assistance is available.

4. **There is an insufficient quantity of equipment to meet expressed needs.** There is only one cassette video machine; thus, it is impossible to assemble edited video tapes. There is no equipment for viewing 3/4 inch video cassettes, which faculty have said is necessary. The Media Director and faculty members expressed concern that much existing equipment is outdated, and is becoming difficult to keep in good working order.

5. Faculty and students expressed need for a center where production of materials is possible, but no student-accessible lab is present.
As noted previously, program staff knew of the first weakness and had developed a proposal to correct these deficiencies as early as fall 1979 (the NCATE team visit occurred in February 1980). The proposal called for expenditures of approximately $5,000. From interviews with central administrative staff during the team visit, it was learned the proposal had yet to be approved. As one central administrator put it:

If we have to create a media laboratory that requires the expenditure of thousands of dollars, we have to be convinced it is necessary.

This particular administrator was predisposed to such an expenditure, but felt he needed NCATE's leverage to justify requesting final approval.

In March 1980, before the Council met, funds were approved.\(^3^4\)

Numerous weaknesses were also noted in the Evaluation and Planning family and one Standard (6.1) was found not met. Initially the department felt it had complied with the requirements, but given the urgency of the situation decided to develop new instruments based on NCATE's findings. These efforts were reported to the Council and in May 1980 use of the instruments began.\(^3^5\)

The attention this school gave NCATE's findings resulted in part from efforts of those who take accreditation seriously as a measure of quality. But in part, it resulted from a concern that denial could trigger consequences for enrollment. As one central administrator put it:

There are two sister institutions in [city] with NCATE accreditation. It would be folly not to try to keep it. If they had it and we didn't, the implication for prospective students as well as
for teachers in the school district would be that they had a higher quality program. A faculty member put it even more bluntly:

There are two other schools in this town with NCATE accreditation. That may not be a good reason for wanting it, but it's sure a good reason for not losing it.

In summary, program officials view NCATE findings as a resource for improving their programs—according to their definitions of quality. They pick and choose among weaknesses according to their own criteria. When it appears that NCATE accreditation may be denied, however, they go to greater lengths to address weaknesses more difficult to correct, weaknesses that require resource allocation by central administrators. What happens in response to Council decisions?

3. After the Council action. If accreditation is granted, little more happens. If accreditation is denied some programs, additional changes may well be made.

a. Institutions granted accreditation for all programs. Six institutions, including the two described earlier that feared for their accreditation, were granted accreditation for all programs. In every case the response to the Council's final Action Letter was the same: no additional changes were initiated (although one school, where the Audit Committee reviewed the programs in depth and developed additional findings of weaknesses, currently is examining one new area). As the Dean put it:

I had to smile over that finding [for the practicum]. It's a real problem all right. The team missed it completely. If the Audit Committee hadn't picked
it up, it would probably still be on the back burner, but now I can move on it.\textsuperscript{38}

With this exception, the prevailing view was that accreditation signalled the end of institutional responsibility to NCATE. Proposals in the works continued to wind their way toward resolution, but no efforts were made to spur them forward on the basis of the Action Letter. As suggested earlier (pp. 67-75), NCATE policy is often made on campus during the team visit. Institutional responses to accreditation certainly bear out this finding.

In one case, however, NCATE accreditation actually led to progress being reversed. For the university where considerable change had been initiated after the team report because it appeared accreditation was in jeopardy, the process came to an abrupt halt. As one source put it:

\begin{quote}
After the Council's decision, everything kind of died. There has been no talk about it since. Everyone feels that chapter has been closed.\textsuperscript{39}
\end{quote}

Efforts to reform the governance structure ceased. Changes in the relationship between the College of Health and the College of Education resulted in modifications on paper but no substantive changes. Students now must be admitted to the professional program in the College of Education and must do their student teaching there, but they still get their degrees from the College of Health. Moreover, any substance behind even these changes has been undermined by verbal understandings between the Deans of the two colleges. While the College of Education has the formal power to screen students, the College of Health selects them in practice. Thus students fill out papers for admission to the
College of Education but must have these papers approved by advisors from the College of Health. For the Practicum, the College of Health still selects the schools and supervises the students. Moreover, as a part of the change, the College of Health gained a tangible benefit: it now has authority to award two new degrees (a B.S. and B.A. in Health and Physical Education), which it could not do before. This provides the College of Health the option of directing students to programs where involvement with the School of Education is even less.\(^\text{40}\)

Efforts to change the status of the MAT program failed to bring those programs under the control of the College of Education. Instead, a two-track program was approved, with both tracks still outside the College of Education. One MAT will be confined to candidates seeking initial certification only. The College of Education can recommend a core curriculum for such a program, but academic departments decide the final content. A second MAT program will be called an M.A. for Secondary Teachers and will be reserved for those with certificates who simply want more content in a specific area.\(^\text{41}\)

No effort to improve the Governance structure in a third area noted by the team and the Council (B.A. in Fine Arts) was even planned.\(^\text{42}\)

Initial efforts to review evaluation procedures died after the Council's decision. In other areas task forces appointed to review requirements found not met for several programs wound down their activities. Some task forces had never met prior to the Council's decision; once the decision was made, they simply disbanded.\(^\text{43}\)

For those in the institution seeking change, the Council's
decision came as a blow. One participant described faculty reactions in the following way:

It did a couple of things. First, it disappointed us. NCATE's image is that Standards will be applied rigorously. After the visit, we were sure we weren't going to make it. After we did, everyone kept asking, how could we have made it? It says something about the whole accreditation process when we can make it with as many problems as we've got.

Secondly, it frustrated us. Now we have to rely on a new dean to see that things that needed to be changed will be changed. If we had been put on the line by not being accredited, things would have happened more quickly. His hand would have been forced sooner. Now we're out on a limb again.

b. Institutions denied accreditation for some programs. Two institutions had programs denied accreditation. One had the same two denied at both the basic and advanced levels and the other had two denied at the advanced level. In the first case, outside levers played a key role in propelling the institution to consider making further change. In the second, outside levers reinforced changes that were sparked principally by the denial decision.

In the first case, the institution outlined in its rejoinder to the Visiting Team Report exactly how far it was prepared to go in making changes to receive NCATE accreditation. The Dean took action in only two areas where a Standard had not been met (Design of Curriculum, 2.1; and Evaluation and Planning, 6.1). He directed the ten departments that failed Standard 2.1 to develop program objectives. He also directed that evaluation instruments for graduates of the program be designed and pilot tested by fall 1980. In areas of governance
and faculty overload, he stated his opinion that the spirit, if not
the letter, of the Standards had been met, and that no further changes
would be made. No mention was made of deficiencies in advising,
curriculum content (the lack of humanistic and behavioral studies for
several programs), and the process for approving student programs at
the doctoral level, which constituted the remaining Standards not met
for numerous programs (as well as the bulk of the weaknesses identified
by the team).\textsuperscript{55}

The Audit Committee that reviewed these programs examined team
findings and institutional materials in depth for all programs. This
Audit Committee had only two members and, as noted earlier, after con-
siderable discussion had reached a political compromise in recommending
denial to one set of programs at each level. The Council discussed
the committee's recommendation at length and finally voted to deny a
second set of programs based on the effect of failure to meet the
Governance family on the overall quality of programs in that second
set (see pp. 80; 125-127).

In this case, NCATE procedures on releasing information to the
public about accreditation decisions were not followed owing to a leak
that resulted in front-page headlines in the local newspaper of that
university the day after the Council's decision ("[Institution's]
Programs Lose Accrediting").\textsuperscript{56}

The article quoted NCATE's Director as having said:

Denial usually means the programs affected can't
receive Federal funding.\textsuperscript{57}

The article also quoted a senior staff official in the State
Department of Education as stating that:

...loss of NCATE accreditation also may hurt [institution's] graduates seeking jobs in other states, such as , which use NCATE accreditation.

This official was also quoted as having said that NCATE's action in such a broad field as secondary education will be "very impacting" on the institution. Several other local newspapers then picked up the story and ran articles on the denial during the next few days.

The effect on the institution, and its subsequent response to weaknesses identified by NCATE, were dramatic. Students began calling the institution to learn whether they should transfer to other schools. Parents called to find out whether they should send their children to the school in the fall.

On June 30, a week after the first article appeared, the Board of Trustees convened a special meeting to discuss a response to NCATE's denial. A senior NCATE staff person attended to answer questions about the Council's decision. The result was a direct order from the Board of Trustees to the President to take any necessary steps to clear up the problem and to seek NCATE accreditation at the earliest possible time.

This directive was then communicated to the Dean as well as to NCATE.

By September a proposal to revise the entire governance procedure was presented to the President for approval. A committee established on July 24 to investigate the problem of overload had been directed to develop a solution to this problem. Also on July 24, a letter from the Dean had been sent to departments where deficiencies in the advising Standard had been found, directing them to come up with proposals to comply with
the Standards. The new Dean of the Graduate School had given an informal commitment to bring to the attention of the Graduate Council a proposal to revise the process for approving student doctoral programs. Finally, the Dean wrote each academic department outside the College of Education where deficiencies in the curriculum content (e.g., lack of humanistic and behavioral studies) had been noted. 52

NCATE denial, the resulting publicity, and subsequent involvement of other levers of power shifted attention of both central and program administrators to numerous weaknesses NCATE had identified but the institution had chosen to ignore in its initial response to the team visit. *

Circumstances at the second school were different, and NCATE's influence on further changes after denial was less dependent on the activation of other levers of power. The two programs denied accreditation accounted for only 5 percent of the students in the graduate program in the School of Education. 53 Moreover, changes needed to correct deficiencies did not require substantive resources. 54 Thus, when the Action Letter came informing the Dean of their denial, he felt he could get the necessary changes going quickly. As he put it, "We were embarrassed by the denial and were ready to go to work." 55 But enrollment concerns also played a role in reinforcing his determination.

*This is the same institution where two internal reports, one by a "Blue Ribbon" Panel and one by a regional accrediting agency, had not led to appreciable change before the NCATE team arrived. As noted earlier, however, NCATE accredited the program that was the main subject of the "Blue Ribbon" report, team members did not use either report in their evaluation of the programs, and Council denial resulted from an in-depth Audit Committee review of the team report and a prolonged Council discussion where a second program was denied at both levels, overruling the Audit Committee's initial recommendation.
Simultaneous with his decision to reform the programs and seek renewed NCATE accreditation, the Dean was interviewed by a reporter from the Chronicle of Higher Education on a forthcoming story about institutions denied NCATE accreditation at the June Council meeting. Publication of that article led to alumni of the program calling department chairpersons to learn if there were any implications for their degrees. At the central administration level, there were problems as well. As the Dean put it:

We were lumped together with many institutions that had a lot of programs rejected. People were confused over program versus institutional accreditation. Some thought [institution] had lost accreditation as an institution. I have been answering a lot of letters and telephone calls. The Vice-Presidents are disturbed.

The result of the interplay of professional embarrassment and threats to enrollment was a shift in emphasis. Whereas the initial institutional response to findings of the team had been simply a description of reforms being considered (the two programs denied accreditation were mentioned only in passing), attention now was focused directly on correcting deficiencies in those two programs, to gain NCATE accreditation. In addition, renewed commitment was given to addressing all areas of concern for remaining programs:

I delegated to the Associate Dean the responsibility to meet with each department where weaknesses were identified, to discuss these problems, as well as others not noted by the team but of which we are all aware. During the fall we will reexamine the team report and implement changes. While I can't list specific changes now, they will take place during the fall and we will get NCATE accredited in the spring.
Council decisions thus do make a difference—at least when accreditation is denied and other levers of power become involved.

In summary, at every level of the accreditation process (self-study, team visit, and Council decision), NCATE is seen as a resource for change. It can prove valuable, as two of the eight schools found during the self-study process. But its value at that stage is limited by the willingness of institutions to devote the effort NCATE expects for the self-study. NCATE also can be useful following the team visit; 13 percent of identified weaknesses were corrected (and an additional 23 percent of the weaknesses were addressed in the form of proposals or task forces to study problems and recommend changes).

But its usefulness at that stage is limited by program administrators' selection of weaknesses to be addressed and the order in which to address them. NCATE's influence at this stage is direct, because program staff select weaknesses from the list identified by NCATE. In some cases, where denial is perceived as likely, institutions give team findings a harder initial look. Should the Council accredit the programs, further change, other than proposals already in the works, does not come about. In fact, when accreditation seems to be in danger but in fact is granted, change can come to a halt, and even regress. Should programs be denied accreditation, a second look is given to the weaknesses. While primary attention is given to those cited in the Action Letter, other areas are considered as well. Since other levers of power often enter the scene at this point, NCATE's influence is more indirect than direct. Those at the central administration level who make the critical resource allocations are more concerned about
stabilizing relationships with outside levers of power than they are about responding to NCATE. The role of outside levers of power is clearly shown in three cases (two where denial seemed a real possibility and one where it occurred). In yet another case, where denial also occurred, administrative leadership, reinforced by pressure from outside levers, was moved in the direction of greater change. NCATE's effect is limited because all institutions denied accreditation do not respond as these two did. To illustrate this point, a random sample of institutions denied NCATE accreditation between 1974 and 1978 is examined in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 8

SCHOOLS WITH ONE OR MORE PROGRAMS DENIED NCATE

ACCREDITATION 1974-78

Between 1974 and 1978, NCATE denied accreditation to one or more programs at seventy-seven institutions. This represents a denial rate of 19 percent for all institutions submitting programs during those years. In 1979, the rate increased slightly, to 20 percent. How do institutions respond to denial? Do they modify programs in areas identified as weak by NCATE? Do they ignore NCATE by making no changes and continuing to train teachers? Do they phase out programs in response to NCATE criticism?

To answer these questions, a study was made of a random sample of institutions having one or more programs denied accreditation between 1974 and 1978. The findings are as follows:

- 62 percent (13 institutions) improved their programs;
- 38 percent (8 institutions) made no changes and continued to train teachers; and
- none phased out their programs.

The most revealing finding, however, came not from figures, but from an analysis of the dynamics that contributed to change. It had been assumed that NCATE denial would have a direct effect on institutional response, as illustrated in Figure 1.
Figure 1

Expected Direct Influence on Institutions

NCATE Findings → Institutional Response:

- Improves programs
- Makes no change and continues training teachers
- Phases out programs

In fact, this direct effect was seen in only two of the thirteen cases where change occurred, and, as the text that follows shows, change was slow in coming and not widespread.

In eleven of thirteen cases, NCATE's influence was more indirect than direct. While institutions used NCATE's list of weaknesses as a basis for making changes, their responses also were directed toward levers of power outside the institution that could significantly affect enrollments. In some cases, these levers were already exerting pressure on the institution; and NCATE denial was perceived as having the potential to (or actually did) increase these pressures. In other cases, new levers of power, triggered by NCATE's denial, entered the scene, creating additional resources for those in the institution seeking change. To the degree central administrators decided to allocate sufficient resources (finances, authority, etc.), change resulted. Figure 2 below shows how this process of indirect influence worked:
As the following pages show, changing programs in a college or university is a complex and difficult process. While NCATE's negative professional evaluation played a role, outside levers of power contributed in critical ways to changes that took place. Ultimately, when change occurred, it came because many forces convinced central administrators to act.
1. Programs That Changed

When change did occur, it was widespread. Table 1 shows that 82 percent of the weaknesses described in NCATE Action Letters to the thirteen institutions were corrected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>Total Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum (Governance)</td>
<td>24 (89)</td>
<td>3 (11)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>21 (84)</td>
<td>4 (16)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>12 (86)</td>
<td>2 (14)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>14 (82)</td>
<td>3 (18)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation/Planning</td>
<td>29 (84)</td>
<td>10 (26)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
<td>(82)</td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Tabulations from NCATE Action Letters to thirteen institutions and telephone interviews with institutional representatives. See the Introduction to Part III for a description of how information was cross-checked.

<sup>a/</sup> Until 1979, the Curricula family also included Governance.

As noted earlier, only two institutions responded directly to NCATE denial, whereas eleven reacted more to pressure from outside levers of power. Before examining the dynamics involved in each type of response, it is necessary to describe characteristics common to institutions that modified their programs.
At all thirteen institutions, programs in professional education enjoyed a strong power base within the institution, producing between 13 and 40 percent of the institution's total graduates. (The average for all thirteen institutions that made changes was 27 percent.) Regardless of the overall philosophy of the institution (liberal arts or professional), the very size of such programs meant they contributed substantially to the institution and thus could make a legitimate claim for resources should reallocation to correct weaknesses be required.

The second common characteristic was the changing nature of the programs in professional education. In most cases where modifications occurred, programs denied accreditation had been in a state of decline for several years. For some, the decline in quality had not been limited to such programs, but included programs throughout the institution as well. This was particularly the case for small, private, liberal arts colleges that experienced sharply declining enrollments in the early 1970s. In other cases, program decline simply reflected a reordering of central administration priorities (responding to new areas of growth such as business or engineering) or of program administration priorities (e.g., dean or chairperson supporting certain professional preparation programs to the detriment of others).

The opposite end of the spectrum, rapid expansion, was also characteristic of several programs undergoing change. Some institutions were attempting to separate themselves from a dominant state university. In both cases, developments were similar: rapid, uncontrolled growth.
Hundreds of new students had been admitted, but faculty ranks had yet to grow and many problems had emerged.

The third common characteristic of programs that modified their programs was a recognition by professional preparation faculty that serious problems existed in their programs. In some cases, this recognition had evolved to a point where a sizable number of faculty were expressing concern about the future of the programs "if something didn't happen soon."

In some cases, this concern had led to the beginning of reform efforts, at either the institutional or program levels before the NCATE team arrived.

The interplay of these characteristics led to a fourth common ingredient—a decline in the legitimacy of those holding positions of authority at both the program and the central administration levels. Faculty members, program chairpersons, deans, provosts, and even presidents were criticizing each other's leadership. At nine of the thirteen institutions, one or more administrators actually had lost his/her position during the period immediately preceding the start of the NCATE accreditation process or the months following the Council's final decision to deny accreditation.

In short, at these institutions NCATE entered a turbulent environment, an environment where change was already underway or the preconditions for change existed.

NCATE's accreditation process and subsequent denial had three direct consequences. First, it focused attention on weaknesses. A professional judgment on the quality of the program had been reached, and
that judgment had to be addressed. Second, the institution, as a single entity, had to respond.* Central administrators and program administrators had to reach agreement on how to respond. Third, groups beyond central administrators and program administrators had the opportunity to become involved. At a minimum, students became aware of the decision; at a maximum, press coverage or the workings of the grapevine created the possibility that legislators, State Departments of Education, alumni, sister institutions, or other significant outside levers either would learn or had learned of the decision. Perceptions of anticipated consequences of involvement by these forces created new resources for those who sought change.

In some cases, the process of change had begun before the NCATE team arrived, and the events that followed denial served to spread and intensify the change by further legitimizing the efforts of those who supported change. In other cases, NCATE's denial provided new opportunities for those seeking change to press for reform. In either case, the potential disrupting effects of outside levers on enrollment provided the larger context in which change occurred. Those who had the power to make key resource allocations (i.e., central administrators) came to

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*During the years 1974-78 (the time period of the sample), NCATE did not require institutions to respond to the Visiting Team's Report. If an institution was denied, it had three options: (1) it could accept the decision; (2) it could request a review of the decision, which meant the case was remanded to a second Evaluation Board for review and the Council made a second decision based on that review; or (3) it could appeal, which meant an Appeals Panel reviewed the case and recommended Council action. Most institutions chose the review route, since it meant their case was examined de novo. Moreover, should they be denied again, the appeals route was still available.
believe that the costs of not acting, in terms of enrollment, outweighed any advantages to avoiding change. A later section of this chapter shows that when change did occur, central administrators had succeeded in neutralizing or minimizing consequences for enrollment. In short, the principal issue became enrollment, with program quality a second priority.

It is appropriate now to illustrate the dynamics of the various responses to denial with case studies. First, programs for which change occurred as a result of outside levers of power and NCATE's professional judgment are examined. Then programs for which NCATE's professional judgment played the principal role in producing change are illustrated. Finally, programs that made no change are examined to show the conditions under which central administrators decided not to act.

a. Programs That Changed: The Role of Outside Levers of Power

[1] NCATE decisions exacerbate pressure from levers of power. In four cases, NCATE's denial increased pressures already applied by outside levers of power. One case illustrates this process of change.

In 1975, NCATE accredited elementary and second programs at the basic level, but denied accreditation for all programs (5) at the master's level, at an institution training primarily minority students.¹ The institution accepted the Council's decision in all areas.²

The first lever of power had been active for some time. Minority institutions face continual pressure from the outside world to demonstrate that their programs produce quality graduates. As one source put it:
In some quarters, people have reached the conclusion that a predominantly black institution can't have a quality program. We need to prove to others that this isn't so. It [NCATE] provides us an opportunity to put our programs on the line with other programs throughout the country. By gaining accreditation, we show that our program is comparable and that we produce graduates who can perform effectively in the classroom.

A second lever had emerged in 1974. In response to a proposal that several state-supported colleges, including this one, be merged into a single state university, leaders of the Black Caucus in the state legislature proposed an alternative. This institution would be maintained as a separate entity and upgraded to university status. They looked to the college for signs of quality to use in support of their proposal.

The college responded by recruiting a new President who had a reputation for developing quality programs (the previous President retired in 1974 after many years of service). According to one source, the new President was "brought in to upgrade the programs." The President in turn hired a new Dean for the undergraduate programs and instructed this Dean and the Dean of the graduate programs to improve their programs. The undergraduate Dean accomplished many changes.

However, numerous problems remained at the graduate level. One source observed:

The graduate Dean and some members of the graduate council were not sensitive to the issues and concerns related to teacher education.

The President then decided to seek NCATE accreditation. Approval would provide the stamp of quality legislative supporters were looking
for and at the same time would demonstrate to the larger public that this institution compared favorably with other, predominantly white institutions. The undergraduate Dean convinced the President to put up all programs, basic and advanced, for NCATE accreditation. This Dean was very explicit in his motives:

I wanted to put up all the teacher education programs because I fully expected the graduate programs to be denied. We needed to change things and I thought denial would facilitate change.\(^7\)

Indeed it did. Immediately after NCATE denied accreditation to the master's level programs, the President acted. He directed that all NCATE-identified weaknesses be addressed and then appeared before the Black Caucus to explain his actions and to emphasize that accreditation for all programs at the basic level had been granted. Given the direct intervention of the President and the delicate political environment surrounding the college's future, resistance from the graduate Dean melted and changes were made.\(^8\) In 1976 the legislature voted to upgrade the status of the college and a return visit by NCATE led to accreditation for the advanced programs. The university could now advertise to the outside world that all its programs were accredited.

\(^2\) NCATE decisions exacerbate pressure from existing levers of power and trigger new levers. In seven cases, NCATE's denial increased pressures already present from outside levers and triggered intervention by other levers as well. Two cases illustrate this process of change.

In 1975, NCATE denied accreditation for all programs at the
basic level at a university. According to program staff, programs in professional education had been in a state of change for at least a decade. In 1966, it was decided to phase out the MA program (the last degree was awarded in 1972). Not only was the scope of the department's offerings undergoing change, but also its enrollments at the basic level were shrinking. During the years 1972-75, the university had unsuccessfully competed with other institutions for a steadily declining pool of eligible students, a development that had caused increasing concern at the central administration level. Thus, the department was under a double squeeze: declining enrollments at the basic level and a mandate to end graduate offerings. As one faculty member put it:

When the NCATE team arrived, a lot of things were up in the air. A lot of questions and doubts existed in people's minds. There was a general air of uncertainty. The denial ended this uncertainty. Given pressures to boost enrollments, the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs were upset about NCATE's negative judgments regarding the teacher education program. They replaced the existing department chairperson with a faculty member who previously had pointed out weaknesses in this program.

The new chairperson proposed a complete revision of the Teacher Education Council to respond to NCATE's finding that the governance structure had failed that Standard. The unit was changed to one that had direct program and policy responsibility. Membership was expanded and two programs in other departments (Music and Physical Education) were brought under its control.

*The institution was a small university with departments, not schools or colleges.
A number of other changes also occurred, but more because of the involvement of an additional lever of power, the State Department of Education. Such involvement led to changes in the areas of objectives, practicum, guidelines from professional associations, faculty loads, curriculum laboratory, and follow-up studies.

The State Department had sent an observer on this NCATE team. As it happened, the teacher education programs were also coming up for their five-year program approval review later that year. After reviewing the NCATE findings, the state representative told the chairperson:

"Your case would look better, if you made some of those changes." The chairperson reported the following sequence of events:

Once we made changes where policy was to be made [governance], all the rest of the changes were made in response to the state. Later that year, we had to write a five-year study for the state [the approval review that time was a paper review with no on-site visit]. The changes were made to satisfy that review.15

As the state representative put it:

NCATE got them on the stick. The report [of the State Review Board that approved the programs later that year] noted, "Further, the institution demonstrated effort since the NCATE visit to remedy difficulties," and then the report cited the institution's addendum when it described the changes taking place.16

A second institution, this one in the process of rapid expansion, also felt the pressure of new levers of power once NCATE accreditation was denied. All MA graduate programs at this university—elementary, secondary, and school service personnel—had been denied accreditation in 1974.17 While the programs in professional education at the
basic level had existed for more than twenty years, the MA programs had begun only in 1970. In response to teacher certification needs for that part of the state, the professional preparation program had, through the university, petitioned the legislature for approval to initiate a master's program. By starting its own master's program, the university had taken an important step: It would no longer feed students into the major state institution for graduate training at the master's level, but would now try to develop a viable graduate program of its own.\textsuperscript{18}

Initial response to the program was positive, and enrollments increased rapidly. But so too did the programs: faculty became overloaded, advising deteriorated, and library resources soon proved inadequate. While both program and central administrators had interests in common (to establish the legitimacy of their new graduate programs separate from the main state university and to see the programs grow), little immediate change occurred for two reasons. First, it took time and effort to get new resources from the legislature. Second, and more important, central administrators were reluctant to request the amounts asked for by the department. They wanted an outside evaluation to provide a benchmark judgment on which weaknesses needed to be addressed first. That was fine with the department, so the groups agreed to put the programs up for NCATE accreditation.\textsuperscript{19}

NCATE denial surprised no one. Program staff felt vindicated by the scope of problems NCATE identified. Central administrators felt they now had additional ammunition to support their requests from the legislature.\textsuperscript{20} But in addition to requesting new resources, central
administrators acted immediately to reallocate available funds to correct deficiencies. They did so in response to two developments triggered by NCATE's denial.

Students began leaving the master's program. Located in the corner of the state, this institution's new MA programs had succeeded in drawing MA candidates from two neighboring states. Once its programs were denied accreditation, institutions with NCATE accreditation in those neighboring states began to promote the advantages of reciprocity in having an NCATE-accredited degree. The Dean noted the consequences for enrollment and resulting institutional reaction:

We began hearing through the grapevine that they [institutions in the two neighboring states] were telling prospective students of our denial. We also heard it from some students in our program who came from those states. So we lost some students.

This in turn made a difference to us in the central administration. The state funding formula is based on enrollment. If the institution faces the prospect of losing students, it sits up and takes notice. 21

In addition, alumni became involved. While the Council's decision did not appear in the press, enough graduates learned of the decision to make inquiries to the Associate Dean. This information, in turn, was relayed on to the central administration. 22

The result was an immediate reallocation of resources to speed change. A second NCATE visit soon followed, and accreditation was granted in 1977.

b. Programs That Changed: The Absence of Outside Levers

In two of the thirteen cases where change occurred, outside
levers played no role in the process. Change resulted in direct response to NCATE's authority as a professional organization. In the first case, only one of many programs was denied accreditation (the doctoral program in Elementary Education).\textsuperscript{23} It was the newest and smallest program offered by the institution. According to a source at the program level:

\begin{quote}
It was a young program. The first students graduated just before the NCATE visit. We probably shouldn't have asked for NCATE accreditation for that program, since it needed a shake-down period.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

In response to NCATE's findings (the denial occurred in 1975), the chairperson responsible for the program established several committees to review the program. The principal result of the review was a proposal to the central administration that more load credit be given to faculty supervising master's and doctoral degree candidates. Aside from the issue of faculty overload, other areas of NCATE concern were not addressed.\textsuperscript{25}

According to a program administrator, this proposal had the effect of helping to move the central administration toward a more flexible approach. They began to recognize this problem, which existed for all departments and not just ours, and as a result they began to consider giving us more credit, which would reduce our load.\textsuperscript{26}

After two years of consideration, the central administration moved to implement the department's proposal for all programs throughout the university.\textsuperscript{27}

At that time (1977), program administrators began to look more closely at that program. Concern had grown that the program was not developing adequately. Thus, the Dean appointed a new chairperson with
a proven record of program improvement.\textsuperscript{28}

This new chairperson lived up to expectations. He succeeded in obtaining authorization for six additional faculty positions over the next several years and recruited highly qualified staff to fill those positions. Together he, the new staff, and the existing staff reviewed the program and made a number of changes that corrected most of the weaknesses identified by NCATE in 1975.\textsuperscript{29}

When asked about outside levers, institutional representatives maintained that none had played a role. The state department, for example, had no authority to review programs beyond the MA and thus was unaware of NCATE's decision on the doctoral program. Given the small size of the program, few students had been affected. No publicity had been given the denial decision, and the program had only a handful of graduates.\textsuperscript{30}

When asked about the gradual nature of change, a program administrator replied:

\begin{quote}
It's a question of power. If denial had put the program in jeopardy for state certification, then the administration would have gotten on the ball sooner. You have to remember that it was only one doctoral program. The administration didn't get in the way of improvements, but they didn't pressure us to work on it either.\textsuperscript{31}
\end{quote}

At a second institution, all master's programs (elementary and secondary) were denied accreditation in 1975; ten years previously, on a first attempt for NCATE accreditation, the same programs had been denied. (On both visits all programs at the basic level had been approved.)\textsuperscript{32}

One official explained the history of the graduate programs in the
following way:

We moved into graduate education prematurely. We had five programs at the undergraduate level. The demand for an MA in Education grew owing to changes in state certification requirements. This pressure led us to move into graduate education before we had created an adequate base for it.  

The graduate program started as a summer program, then shifted to a weekend program. At present it is a late afternoon/evening program. Beginning in the early 1970s enrollments increased sharply, from about 50 a year to 150 to 180 a year. It was during this period of growth that NCATE's second visit took place. 

No one at the institution was surprised by the denial in 1975. NCATE was seen as a resource to point out problem areas so the institution could improve itself. Between the years 1975 and 1980, changes took place gradually in each of the areas noted by NCATE as a major weakness. 

According to program staff, no pressure was exerted by the state department, for several reasons:

We have an excellent informal working relationship with the state department. The person responsible for our institution used to teach here and knows about our problems and the changes we're making. 

In addition, the Board of Regents encouraged programs to seek NCATE accreditation at the basic level, but not at the advanced level, which further reduced state department involvement at that level. 

Considering the steady increase in enrollment, it appears students were less concerned about denial than about using the program to meet continued certification requirements.
When asked about the gradual nature of change, a program administrator replied:

If we had been denied at the undergraduate level, there would have been more concern. Undergraduate accreditation is more important and the state would have been more involved. It's more an accommodation process at the graduate level.

Since there is no pressure from the Board of Regents or the state to get these programs accredited, we plan to wait for our next cycle, which comes up in 1985. That was a political decision. We've just decided to stall the visit until then.

In summary, as these two cases show, change did occur in areas identified as weak by NCATE, even when outside levers played no role.

Considering the pace and scope of change, NCATE's impact is open to question. Professional authority, by itself, is a weak base from which to improve teacher education programs.

What about programs denied accreditation that made no changes? Why do they pursue this course? It is appropriate now to answer these questions.

2. Programs That Did Not Change

Eight institutions (38 percent of the sample) had one or more programs denied accreditation and made no changes in areas identified by NCATE as weaknesses. (Two program administrators reported they improved documentation procedures but made no substantive changes in any area identified by NCATE as weak.). What factors contributed to such a response?

For institutions that made no changes, three patterns emerged. In some instances, the same characteristics existed and outside levers were

*Programs in professional education programs enrolled an important percentage of the institution's total student body; programs were in a state of change; faculty at the program level were concerned about the decline in quality; and the authority of those responsible for programs were under question.
found to be operating, but central administrators succeeded in managing
the pressure in their resistance to change. In other cases, only some
of the conditions existed and outside levers exerted little if any
pressure. Finally, in a few cases none of the conditions existed and
no pressure was exerted from outside levers. In each area, the role
of central administrators proved to be critical, since ultimately they
were the ones who decided how far to go in responding to NCATE's concerns.

a. **Pattern One: Identical Characteristics, Levers Operating, Central
Administration Resists**

The criticisms NCATE made in 1975 about our MA
programs are just as relevant today as they were
then, perhaps even more relevant. The library
holdings are still weak, we have no evaluation
procedures, students can substitute courses to
meet various requirements, the faculty is still
overloaded and the advising is poor. I tried to
make some changes when I first came in, but now
I know it will never happen. No one takes NCATE
seriously. Unless NCATE can help us get more
funding, things aren't going to change.39

This statement by the Dean of the school of education sums up
several years of frustration in trying to bring about change. Following
NCATE denial, this person had been promoted from department chair-
person to Dean with what he thought was a mandate for reform. Within
a short time, however, he learned the possibilities for change were
limited, at best.

The programs denied accreditation had expanded rapidly owing
to revised certification requirements. To achieve final certification,
teachers were required to take additional courses at the graduate level.
Given its geographic location, the program quickly evolved into a service
program for teachers to fulfill the new certification requirements.
Efforts to increase resources so changes could be made were rebuffed by a coalition of other state schools that wanted the legislature to address their needs first. Given legislature reluctance to provide resources needed for improvement, initial central administration support for change declined after a short period of time. In this case, an outside lever of power (the legislature) worked to dampen the possibility for change.

Efforts to accomplish change by a Dean at a second institution led to his dismissal in the wake of central administration resistance. This primarily black institution in the South had both its basic and advanced programs denied accreditation. According to program administrators, the denial was justified, given the decline in quality during the previous eight years. As one source put it:

Teacher education has traditionally played an important role in this university. Up until recently it was predominantly a teacher's college. But in the last eight years, career opportunities have opened for students in engineering and business, and the administration has put its money into these areas. They don't give much to the College of Education.

Following NCATE denial and the subsequent publicity, considerable alumni pressure developed. In response, the central administration moved to correct deficiencies in the Governance area at the basic level, but did nothing to improve programs at the advanced level. After a second visit, NCATE accredited programs at the basic level but again denied programs at the advanced. According to one source:

The administration did just enough to get NCATE accreditation so they could quiet the alumni. Things were done for administrative convenience, not for quality programs.

Another source noted:
The administration resisted making changes in faculty loads and follow-up evaluation. This reflected their basic lack of support for teacher education. Our previous Dean fought to get changes in these areas and in the process lost his job.45

Interviews with other sources identified additional reasons for the resistance. Considerable uncertainty existed regarding the future of numerous programs at the university. The U.S. Department of Justice had (and still has) a lawsuit pending against the dual system of higher education in that state. The university is in a geographic area dominated primarily by white institutions. Efforts to settle the suit out of court have led to discussions of consortia, course trading, and program relocation for all programs, not just teacher education. In an effort to present the strongest case for programs that provide new opportunities for minority students, the central administration has elected to build up the engineering and business programs rapidly while doing only the minimum necessary to maintain the teacher education program. Such efforts, they hope, will improve their bargaining position when final decisions have to be made on program location.46

These two cases show that outside levers can be balanced off against one another or can actually impede efforts to accomplish change. But the decision on whether to try for change and how far to go are still up to central administration.

b. Pattern Two: Some Characteristics Present, Levers Operating Weakly, Central Administration Resists

While these dynamics existed in several cases, only one is described here to illustrate the process. In this case, the professional education program supplied 45 percent of graduates at the institution,
so its power base was important. But its programs, in the eyes of the faculty in professional education, had been strong over the years. Thus, NCATE's decision to deny accreditation (1978) caught both them and the central administration by surprise. Program staff were unwilling to acknowledge the existence of weaknesses identified by NCATE. Central administrators were upset about the denial and supported the program staff's interpretation.\footnote{A year later (1979) the institution reapplied for NCATE accreditation and received it—with only minor modifications made in the interim.\footnote{The reason for reapplication was simple: the state department's program approval system, instead of involving an on-site visit, relied on NCATE's evaluation and thus required all schools to be NCATE-accredited. In the aftermath of denial, institutional representatives visited the state department and explained their position. State department representatives agreed they had a grievance but suggested they review their programs anyway and seek NCATE accreditation at the earliest possible time.\footnote{Institutional officials hired a consultant with long experience in NCATE who recommended some minor modifications.\footnote{A second NCATE team found nearly every Standard met, and the Council subsequently approved all programs.}}}}

c. **Pattern Three: No Characteristics Present, No Levers Operating, Central Administration Resists**

Several institutions differed in significant ways from those where change occurred. Programs in professional education represented only a small part of their offerings. The institutions enjoyed statewide or

\*Since interviews were not conducted with members of the two NCATE teams involved here, it is impossible to determine whether one team used the in-depth approach and the other the presence-or-absence or whether both used the same approach.
national reputations and thus were assured of an ongoing pool of students for their programs. While professional preparation faculty agreed that NCATE had identified serious weaknesses in their programs, these weaknesses had been there since the start of the programs; the faculty made no effort to propose changes since they knew the response would be negative. In no case did any outside lever become involved.

The picture is now complete. Change, when it occurs, is the result of certain conditions interacting with pressure from outside levers of power and concern over NCATE's professional judgment that the programs are of poor quality. When pressure on the central administration is sufficient, change results. When it is weak or can be balanced off against other pressures, change does not occur. The role of NCATE's judgment is important. The role of outside levers of power is even more important. But, in the final analysis, it is the role of the central administration that counts, for ultimately they have the power to decide major issues of resource allocation.

3. A Side Issue: NCATE Accreditation Versus State Approval

Before concluding this chapter, it is useful to discuss briefly the role State Departments of Education played in the improvement of programs of professional education studied in this sample. The twenty-one institutions comprising this sample were located in sixteen states. Every program denied NCATE accreditation enjoyed state approval at the time of denial. This suggests that state evaluation procedures may have less effect on the quality of professional education programs than NCATE in

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the areas where their evaluations overlap.*

Additional research focusing specifically on state agency
practices would be required to substantiate this tentative conclusion.
However, interviews with state agency officials provided data that
support such an assertion. Only four of the sixteen State Departments
intervened as a result of NCATE's evaluation (either following the
team visit or in the wake of denial). In two instances, state observers
on the teams made informal suggestions that program administrators heed
NCATE's concerns in order to strengthen their cases for upcoming program
approval visits. In two other states, NCATE denial automatically triggered
state involvement. For the remaining twelve states, little or no atten-
tion was given to NCATE's findings. With rare exceptions, state ob-
servers simply returned to their jobs following the NCATE visits, made
no oral or written reports of their findings, did not make available
to other staff members copies of the Visiting Team Reports, and did not
brief members of the next program approval teams on their observations.
They simply ignored NCATE's findings.\(^{51}\) Moreover, the following quotes,
which are representative of states that did nothing after observing team
visits, suggest such action was deliberate:

> We could care less if a school holds NCATE accreditation. We have several institutions
> training teachers without NCATE accreditation. My views are pretty standard throughout the
> country. In fact, there is not a single state I can think of that gives a hoot.\(^{52}\)

\(^*\)State agencies that use the NASDTEC Standards review the same
areas as NCATE. In addition, they review specialty program components.
Typically, they devote most of their time to program components, since
those lead to certification. See also p. 100.
It doesn't make any difference to us what NCATE says or does. We could care less.\textsuperscript{53}

I think NCATE is for the birds.\textsuperscript{54}

The reasons for such strong feelings are not hard to find. During the past few years an acrimonious, often bitter, debate has evolved between NCATE and numerous states over their respective roles in monitoring the quality of programs in professional education. In 1980 the conflict reached new proportions as the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (the organization representing state agencies) formally withdrew from NCATE's membership under the threat of ouster for having failed to pay dues over a number of years.

As state agencies have developed the capacity to conduct on-site program approval visits, their interest in NCATE has waned. Since legal responsibility for certification rests with each state, they feel such additional capacity reduces their need to rely on NCATE findings. NCATE objects to this line of reasoning, arguing that states have a parochial view of what must be required of a program and that states are more subject to internal political pressures than is a national organization. NCATE's concern is also related to its own organizational needs. It fears that growing state involvement can reduce institutional interest in seeking national accreditation. Regardless of the ultimate outcome of this dispute, the immediate implications are clear: most state agencies interviewed for this sample failed to use information provided by the NCATE team visit to improve programs of professional education.
Such a finding is important because institutions seldom disputed the accuracy of NCATE's findings. For institutions denied accreditation comprising this sample, institutional representatives described only 18 percent of NCATE findings as inaccurate, and most of these judgments came from schools that made no changes in their programs. As noted earlier, one strength of the presence-or-absence approach is its ability to detect most of the tasks or functions that are not performed at all; based on interviews with institutional representatives, it appears that NCATE identifies major weaknesses that are there for all to see. Thus, state agency reluctance to use such information suggests they fail to use a resource that could considerably improve their own ability to monitor program quality.

In fairness to states, however, it must be noted that NCATE's present operating policy of not informing state agencies of final Council decisions contributes to inaction. (The most NCATE does, besides sending the observer a copy of the Visiting Team Report, is to send each State Department a copy of its annual list.) While state representatives knew what the respective NCATE teams had found because they sent observers, most did not know that NCATE had denied accreditation to the programs. Those who did heard it through the grapevine or from the institutions themselves.

It should also be noted that some states do work effectively with NCATE. At least two have designed their program approval systems so that NCATE denial automatically triggers their involvement, and another recently moved to develop closer cooperation with NCATE in the
area of joint visits.*

In summary, while the relationship between NCATE and State Departments of Education is complex (and this study provides evidence on only a small part of this complexity), the evidence suggests that state evaluation procedures in areas where their evaluations overlap with NCATE's may be less effective than those used by NCATE. Had there been no NCATE review, those institutions denied accreditation that made numerous changes would likely have continued with "business as usual," given state program approval. At best, change would have taken longer and might not have occurred on the scale that it did.

4. Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has shown that many factors interact to promote change in programs in professional education: a strong power base for the education program within the institution, turbulent conditions in the teacher education program itself, a negative judgment by a national professional organization, and the activation of outside levers of power. The central administration is the ultimate target, for it is there that final power lies in terms of resource allocation. When the central administration decides to support change, change occurs.

The latter statement is based on observation of one joint NCATE-State visit included in the sample of eight institutions that underwent the NCATE accreditation process during 1979-80. In addition, responses to a survey of NASDTEC members released in the summer of 1980 showed that 16 states indicated a "strong" interest in possible cooperation/collaboration with NCATE; six states indicated they were "not interested," which also indicated a preference for no further discussion of the matter; 29 states indicated they were "mildly interested or not interested," and had no objection to further discussion. See Sidney Simandle, "Survey of Possible State-NCATE Relationships" (NASDTEC, Summer, 1980), summary sheet.
NCATE's role in providing an evaluation by professionals is important—and under certain conditions contributes to promoting widespread change. But this professional authority is considerably enhanced when additional levers of power that rest on economic or legal authority come into play. When this happens, NCATE's indirect influence plays a significant role in improving the program.

The importance for NCATE of recognizing a need to maintain and enhance access to such levers of power becomes apparent when it is noted that 38 percent of the institutions with one or more programs denied accreditation simply ignore NCATE and continue to train professional educators. Since the total percentage of institutions with one or more programs denied accreditation is modest to begin with (20 percent in 1979), NCATE, to make more than a marginal difference, might profit from seriously examining ways to improve its own accreditation procedures as well as its access to other levers of power. Some possible avenues of reform are discussed in Part IV.
PART IV

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
This report has shown that unintended consequences of procedures and a relatively weak power base seriously constrain NCATE's ability to regulate, in practice, any more than some of the worst professional programs for educators. NCATE must decide whether its present level of regulation is consistent with its outspoken support of consumer protection.

In reviewing possible alternative directions for change, it is necessary to keep in mind three limitations in NCATE's capacity to change: its ultimate source of power, professional authority; its dependence on volunteer help; and its financial reliance on institutions it accredits. Within these constraints, several alternatives are worthy of consideration.

In considering these alternatives, it is important to remember that NCATE has already made numerous changes in recent years to improve its ability to monitor program quality. Moreover, its broad base of organizational support means it is not entirely beholden to those it seeks to regulate. In fact within the ranks of institutions are groups that actively support a more vigorous enforcement of the Standards. Thus, while there are constraints, there are also opportunities.
1. Maintenance of the Status Quo

The obvious advantage of this alternative is the savings in time, effort, and money required to review procedures and practices. Given the weight of the findings from this study regarding the consequences of NCATE's prevailing approach to accreditation, there may be repercussions in pursuing this alternative for NCATE's professional authority. Moreover, given the important role of outside levers of power in promoting change, it must be questioned whether professional judgment is the chief force motivating institutional change. Following this alternative, therefore, may increase the tension between NCATE's avowed support for consumer protection and its practice of regulating only some of the substandard programs for educators.

2. Improvements in the Presence-or-Absence Approach

NCATE could revise its procedures to promote exclusive use of the presence-or-absence approach. NCATE participants and institutions could be informed that only requirements in the summary Standards would be applied. NCATE could state explicitly that Preambles will be used only as background information or expectations of desirable levels of future performance. Training sessions could then be oriented toward only the summary Standards. This would allow time to clarify areas of present confusion over certain Standards (e.g., confusion among Visiting Team chairpersons about the appropriate level to apply the Governance and the Evaluation and Planning Standards). Institutions could be encouraged to address only summary Standards. An internal NCATE review process could ensure that Institutional Reports comply with this
requirement, before teams were sent to the campus.

Such action would remove a major inconsistency in NCATE practice, since both the presence-or-absence approach and the in-depth approach are now used, and could be accomplished within present constraints of finances and volunteer help.

The principal disadvantage of this alternative would be its effect on professional education programs. NCATE would be lowering its requirements to meet current practice. Schools that make changes in response to requirements in the more rigorously stated Preambles (either during the self-study phase or as the result of in-depth penetration of that Standard) would no longer have an incentive to do so.

Given the general language of the summary Standards, only complete absence could be an acceptable reason for judging a Standard not met. Any benefits of consistency might be outweighed by an even larger gap between NCATE's efforts to promote consumer protection and its practice of giving the benefit of the doubt to the institution.

3. Incremental Change Toward a More Rigorous Application of the Standards (The In-Depth Approach)

NCATE could make a number of internal changes as well as explore ways to improve access to other levers of power.* Within the organization, changes in existing Standards could be made. For example, the format could be revised to omit the word "Standard" for the summary. New headings could make clear that requirements in the entire Standard must be addressed by institutions in their Institutional Reports and by

*A more detailed outline of possible changes appears in Appendix C.
teams during the visit. A policy manual could be developed for use by NCATE participants at every level, including institutions. Such a manual could provide a rationale for each Standard, show how Standards could be related to one another, and provide examples of appropriate and inappropriate practices drawn from Visiting Team Reports and Council decisions.

A second set of Standards could be developed, emphasizing outcome measures of performance. The basis for such a set of Standards might be the Curricula and the Evaluation and Planning families, since, of all the process-oriented Standards, these are most compatible with such an approach. This set of Standards could then be made available to the institutions that felt they had truly outstanding programs, as an option to the existing Standards. This action might provide an incentive for additional such schools to seek NCATE accreditation as well as encourage schools already enjoying NCATE accreditation to seek higher levels of performance.

A system for screening Institutional Reports and Visiting Team Reports could be developed to reduce the incidence of incomplete reports, which hamper team and Council efforts to evaluate programs. Evaluation procedures could be revised to reward in-depth penetration by team members. Training sessions could be modified to promote greater understanding of all requirements, thereby increasing the likelihood that the in-depth approach would be used. Modifications could be made to Visiting Team procedures to ensure that time is used more efficiently. Consideration could be given to increasing the size of teams and
extending the team visit by one day.

Such changes might improve NCATE's procedures significantly, but would they lead to greater institutional change? The findings of this study suggest that any changes in NCATE's internal process must be linked to changes in access to other levers of power. Professional authority, by itself, is a weak power base for improving the quality of professional programs for educators.

Thus NCATE might profitably explore additional ways to: (1) make the public more aware of its accreditation decisions by expanding its dissemination activities; (2) improve relationships with selected State Departments of Education; (3) develop a link between eligibility for Federal funds and accreditation by a recognized program accrediting agency; (4) increase the number of school districts requiring NCATE accreditation as a precondition for employment; and (5) develop alternative funding sources from institutions for its accrediting activities.

This alternative has the advantage of linking procedural change with improved access to levers of power. It is the conclusion of this study that this alternative would increase NCATE's ability to improve the quality of professional programs for educators. The major disadvantages are several. Until alternative funding sources are developed, new resources for beginning to change procedures and initiating studies of how to improve access to other levers of power must be found within the organization. Institutions would have to bear additional costs if more members were added to teams and an additional day were allocated for the visit. Constituent member dues might have to support some
increase in NCATE headquarters staff to implement procedural changes.

More rigorous evaluation might tax the limits of voluntary participation.

Regardless of the alternative chosen, costs are involved, but so too are opportunities. The question is what role, if any, NCATE wants to play in protecting the consumer from poor quality programs for educators. Only NCATE can provide the answer.
APPENDIX A

THE IN-DEPTH APPROACH
Observation of team visits provided the opportunity to interview members about their experiences on other NCATE teams. A team member on one presence-or-absence visit described how different her experience had been on another team. Members of that team were then interviewed and the following dynamics were uncovered. They provide further evidence that a chairperson, by setting a certain level of expectations, can influence team penetration into a program.

Members of that team described their chairperson in the following way:

She probed; we worked. She reviewed; we worked some more.

It was the best team visit I've been on. We didn't leave a stone unturned.

She gave that institution every chance. After she summarized where we were, she asked us what she'd overlooked. She even had us go back on Wednesday morning to check some final facts.

If the institution didn't meet every requirement in the Standard, she felt the institution hadn't met the Standard.¹

The chairperson described above took specific steps to minimize the effects of constraints that affect all teams, enabling her team to penetrate deeper than the typical team into the actual workings of the program being reviewed. The result, in this case, was a critical report and a Council decision to deny accreditation for many of the programs presented by the institution. The institution successfully appealed the denial, but the Council, after reviewing the case, reaffirmed its original decision to deny. Partly in response to NCATE's denial and partly in
response to pressure from the State Department of Education, the institution is now making changes to correct weaknesses identified by NCATE and has scheduled a new NCATE review for the spring of 1981.²

How did this team operate? The chairperson set the tone at the first Sunday evening meeting. Beginning at 4:30 p.m. and continuing well past midnight, with only a short break for a courtesy call to the institution, she reviewed every requirement in each

Standard to ensure that team members knew what was required. The group spent a great deal of time discussing methods for gathering evidence, including specific evidence questions, so that findings could be adequately supported. Assignments were discussed to make certain members knew exactly what their responsibilities were. The task was made easier because each team member had received a copy of the Institutional Report and his/her assignment 6 weeks before the visit. (While all NCATE teams receive these materials before the visit, they generally arrive much closer to the time of the visit, which limits the opportunity for in-depth advance preparation.) In addition to making the usual preliminary visit to the campus to request additional documentation, the chairperson arrived a full day before the rest of the team to gather and sift the materials so that team members could have it before they went on campus. During the Sunday night meeting she discussed this material with the appropriate team member(s).

The chairperson also discussed with the team her concerns about about the institution's program and solicited their comments. The
team then developed a list of issues and questions that might help illuminate those concerns. Commenting on this first session, one participant remarked, "We knew exactly what we were to do. We were ready with our questions."³

Monday evening, after a day of gathering evidence, the team reconvened. From 8:30 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. it reviewed the findings. Once again the Standards, including specific requirements and interpretations, were discussed. Findings were related to specific requirements under each Standard. In so doing, team members learned where the information gaps were. They finished the evening with a revised set of issues and new questions to ask.

Tuesday evening was a time for reaching consensus on whether a program met the Standards. The session lasted long into the night (3:00 a.m.) Once again the Standards were a focal point of discussion, with specific requirements and interpretations receiving most attention. When the evidence that a Standard had been met was overwhelming, the process was easy; the same was true for Standards that clearly were not met. But these clear-cut cases did not make up the majority. Discussion focused on many components of a number of Standards for which the evidence was conflicting. What follows is a discussion of those components and the factors that weighed most heavily in the team's final decision that one or more of the programs failed to meet NCATE's requirements.

The institution, a medium-sized state university, had presented programs at both the basic and advanced levels. The governance structure for the secondary programs at the basic level was found to be
inadequate. While structure was similar to the elementary program's (which was approved), the team person responsible for this area had found evidence that program development was not always the "primary responsibility" of the School of Education. The relevant component of that Standard, it will be recalled, requires that "the design, approval, and continuous evaluation" of teacher education programs be the primary responsibility of an officially designated unit. In terms of design, at least, the team report noted the following problems:

Changes involving secondary teacher preparation are initiated by the discipline department;

Each program was then reviewed by the Department of Mathematics and the appropriate section...of the School of Education;

The Department of Modern Foreign Language claims almost total responsibility for the preparation of Language teachers.²

While the School of Education played a role in the approval stages of the decision-making process, its role was minimal in the initial stage, at least for secondary education programs in the discipline departments. After considerable discussion, the team decided this Standard was not met for all secondary programs.⁵

Similarly, the evidence was mixed for one component of the Curricula family, the design requirement, and its subcomponent, the multicultural requirement. The design requirement, it will be recalled, mandates that curricular objectives of the teacher education program be stated explicitly and reflect a conception of the teacher's role. There is to be a direct and obvious relationship between the objectives and the components of the curriculum.
The team and the institution differed over how the term "explicit" should be defined. The "Sunday evening seminar" had convinced those responsible for this Standard that it was not enough for a program to state general role objectives (e.g., elementary or secondary teacher) and list courses and skills to be developed to perform such roles. By "explicit" the team meant clearly stated course outcomes that could be related to detailed role expectations.

One team member explained it this way:

Course syllabi provided broad statements about what the course was about. We were looking for more specific objectives that would tell us what the student could do once the course was over. For example, take a course in composition. A description would be, "This is a course on paragraphs. The students will write paragraphs." A course objective would be "A student will be able to write a coordinated, unified paragraph." We just didn't find this kind of specificity.

Failing to find such specificity for all programs at the basic level, the team determined that the Standard had not been met. The team report on this point read as follows:

**Weakness**

Rather than explicit objectives reflecting the institution's conception of the teacher's role, the statement of purpose provided the team broad statements relative to preparation of teachers.

Since the statements are not explicit it was not possible for the team to validate a direct and obvious relationship between objectives and the components of the curriculum.

Curriculum folios, with rare exceptions, were either not available, were single page book outlines or, at best several pages of very general goals.
The team could not ascertain how the attached statement was developed or if it had been reviewed by the department or School of Education.

*Standard is not met.*

The team found that only 1 of the 10 programs at the advanced level failed to meet this Standard.

In the multicultural area, all but one program at both the basic and advanced levels were found deficient and were determined not to have met the Standard. Here again, however, the evidence was mixed.

Critical to the team's decision was its interpretation that the Standard requires a program to have more than just a few examples of courses that address multicultural issues; there must be a systematic intervention in all phases of the curriculum to meet the Standards. For the elementary program at the basic level, the team wrote:

Evidence of change in ECE 425 is reported by Dr. [Insert name]. This intervention deals with outside research on bilingual children, children with divergent language patterns. Review of research by a student, Multicultural E.C.E. Research. A Unit is being developed for future use in E.C.E. 425.

Reading 451 has been modified as reported by Dr. [Insert name] by identifying phoeneme substitutions and syntactical errors as linguistic variations rather than errors in reading. E.C.E. 323, 422, 423 include field experiences in which students learn to communicate with all disadvantaged children and share these in reports.

**Weaknesses**

Although the descriptors illustrate a variety of incidents regarding multicultural education there is no systematic procedure for intervention into and assessment of multicultural education in its curriculum.

*Standard is not met.*
For the secondary program at the basic level, the team noted:

There is no evidence of planning for multicultural education in the teacher education curricula. An intervention process for systematically dealing with the four items listed in the standard does not exist. There are all college programs for enrichment. In this area there is a lack of organization, planning, and understanding. In interviews there is some evidence that several professors are dealing with multiculturalism on an individual basis as each person desires to do so.

Weaknesses

Although there are enrichment programs such as those provided by the Foreign Language Department, and those cultural opportunities provided at the all college level, there is no overall planned intervention process developed for teacher education programs.

There is an overall misunderstanding of the concept of multiculturalism as established by the standard.

Standard is not met.⁹

Programs at the basic and advanced levels were also deemed to be deficient in the "family of Standards" dealing with Evaluation, Program Review, and Planning. Once again, the team differed with the institution, with the team analyzing critically the efforts made and the institution countering that enough had been done to justify a favorable determination. With respect to evaluation for the elementary and secondary program at the basic level, the team wrote:

There is no systematic evaluation of graduates after they enter the teaching profession. Evaluation of graduates is done largely on an informal basis through staff contact with former students, with supervisors and superintendents in the area, and with graduates who later enter the graduate program.

New state requirements for Criterion Referenced tests for graduates were implemented September 1978 and one set of results has been received. Competency-based
Teacher Education programs must be submitted for approval by the State Department of Education by September 1, 1980.

An exception to this is the Special Education Department which does a survey of its graduates each year and ratings are obtained from the graduate's supervisor. The results of these surveys are used for the modification and improvement of the program.

Weaknesses

1. There is no indication that the institution uses emerging evaluation techniques.

2. One survey of all graduates does not meet requirement of systematic effort to evaluate the quality of its graduates.

3. There is no evidence of performance of graduates in relation to program objectives.

Standard is not met. 10

While it must be remembered that this team visit was reconstructed through interviews and not observed for this research, the evidence presented strongly suggests that team chairpersons can affect the level of team penetration by establishing a set of expectations.

These expectations are independent of program quality.
APPENDIX B

SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND DATA PRESENTATION
Table 1 shows the distribution of the institutions that had one or more programs denied NCATE accreditation between 1974 and 1978. The cases were drawn randomly from each cell. Using a chi-square statistic, a test was made of the hypothesis that the proportion of schools changing was the same in every cell in the population. The test was not significant at the .1 level, hence the null hypothesis was accepted.
### Table 1

INSTITUTIONS WITH ONE OR MORE PROGRAMS DENIED NCATE ACCREDITATION, 1974-78
BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION AND NUMBER OF OTHER PROGRAMS ACCREDITED BY NCATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</th>
<th>PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. Level</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Programs Still Accredited by NCATE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 0</td>
<td>Population 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Sampled 2</td>
<td>No. Sampled 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. that Changed 0</td>
<td>Type of Change:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existing &amp; New Levers 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Some Programs Still Accredited by NCATE | | |
| No. Sampled 3 | No. Sampled 5 | No. Sampled 4 | No. Sampled 2 | No. Sampled 1 | No. Sampled 2 |
| No. that Changed 3 | No. that Changed 4 | No. that Changed 0 | No. that Changed 0 | No. that Changed 1 | No. that Changed 1 |
| Type of Change: | Type of Change: | | | Type of Change: | | |
| Existing Levers 1 | Existing Levers 1 | | | Existing Levers 1 | | |
| Existing & New Levers 1 | Existing & New Levers 1 | | | Existing & New Levers 1 | | |
| No. Levers, NCATE Only 1 | No. Levers, NCATE Only 1 | | | No. Levers, NCATE Only 1 | | |
APPENDIX C

INCREMENTAL CHANGE TOWARD THE IN-DEPTH APPROACH
This Appendix outlines in greater detail the third alternative presented in Chapter 9, Incremental Change Toward the In-Depth Approach. It describes needed changes in NCATE's accreditation process, including its Standards, and links such changes to increased access to levers of power.

I. Changes Within NCATE (Internal Factors)

A. Revise existing Standards

1. Modify Standards to promote greater clarity.
   
a. Remove inconsistencies between "Preamble" and "Standard."
   
b. Increase clarity of specific Standards; e.g.:
      1. Governance (institutionwide vs. program); and
      2. Evaluation (institutionwide vs. program).
   
c. Revise format of Standards to encourage focus on the "Preamble" and the "Standard" rather than only the "Standard."
   
d. Submit to Council for approval at its February/March 1981 meeting and disseminate.

2. Develop a Policy Manual explaining each Standard to provide guidance for institutions as they plan and carry out their self-study, for Visiting Teams as they gather data on programs, for Audit Committees and Council members as they make accreditation decisions, and for Appeals Board members as they review appeals.
a. Develop a rationale for each Standard, justifying its importance and explaining its meaning.

- Provide examples of appropriate and inappropriate practices drawn from Visiting Team Reports and Council decisions. Develop hypothetical examples.

b. Show how Standards are interrelated.

- Provide examples of appropriate and inappropriate practices drawn from Visiting Team Reports and Council decisions. Develop hypothetical examples.

c. Develop questions and procedures for Visiting Teams members to gather data systematically.

- Review and revise existing manuals for team members.

d. Submit to Council and team chairpersons for approval at February/March 1981 Council meeting and dissemination.

B. Develop a new set of Standards for schools with outstanding programs.

1. Develop proposal.

2. Submit to funding sources.

3. Develop new Standards.

4. Submit to Council for approval at its October 1981 meeting.

C. Develop system for screening Institutional Reports and Visiting Team Reports.

1. Review current requirements for Institutional Reports and redesign requirements to obtain more data appropriate for planning team visits and reviewing program(s) in depth.

a. Examples of provisions to facilitate planning:

- Advance submission of class lists to chairperson to facilitate random selection; pre-visit telephone interviews with students by appropriate team person;
• Advance submission of names of schools for possible on-site visitation to facilitate random selection; pre-visit telephone interviews with principals; and

• Advance submission of faculty names and program responsibilities to facilitate proper identification and selection; appointments made in advance.

b. Examples of provisions to facilitate in-depth review of programs:

• Requirement that institutions present data in the Institutional Report showing they have met requirements in both the "Standard" and the "Preamble"; provide examples from Institutional Reports that show how this can be done; and

• Requirement that institutions show how programs meet Standards that interrelate with one another.

2. Review Federal government agency and professional association procedures for screening proposals, reports and articles, for possible application to NCATE review process.

3. Develop procedures for NCATE review of Institutional Reports using professionals from the field (higher education), practitioners, and subject matter specialists.

4. Develop NCATE office procedures for collecting reviewer comments and assisting institutions in making necessary corrections.

5. Develop a policy on unsatisfactory Institutional Reports for NCATE Council approval, including the right to postpone a team visit until a satisfactory Institutional Report had been received.

6. Develop procedures for NCATE staff to review Visiting Team Reports to ensure appropriateness of format and adequacy of information for Audit Committee review.

7. Submit resulting report to Council for approval at its February/March 1981 meeting and pilot test new procedures.

D. Review and revise procedures for selecting and evaluating team members and team chairpersons.
1. Review current procedures for selecting team members and chairpersons.

2. Develop guidelines for selecting team members and chairpersons who will review programs in depth.

3. Review current criteria for evaluating team members and chairpersons.

4. Develop additional criteria to promote recruitment of participants who will review programs in depth.

5. Submit resulting report to Council for approval at its February/March 1981 meeting and implement new procedures.

E. Modify training program for prospective team members and team chairpersons to emphasize in-depth analysis of Standards.

1. Develop recommendations for change. Possible revisions include:

   a. Sending participants the Policy Manual and a copy of the Standards before the training session starts;

   b. Sending participants examples of hypothetical problems, to be solved before the training session starts; and

   c. Allocating an additional day for training sessions to focus on discussion and analysis of Standards (including small group problem-solving sessions).

2. Submit recommendations to Council for approval at its February/March 1981 meeting and pilot test the new procedures in the spring and summer of 1981.

F. Develop training program for currently eligible team members, to encourage in-depth analysis of Standards.

1. Develop recommendations. Features might include:

   a. Holding a one and one-half day session to review Standards, site visit procedures, and reporting format;

   b. Sending participants the Policy Manual and a copy of the Standards in advance, with hypothetical problems to solve;

   c. Using small group problem-solving sessions; and
d. Providing feedback on performance.

2. Submit recommendations to Council for approval at its February/March 1981 meeting and pilot test new program in the spring and summer of 1981 with a sample of eligible team members.

G. Modify site visit procedures used by Visiting Teams.

1. Develop procedures to ensure that materials are sent to team members sufficiently in advance to permit in-depth review of programs.

2. Develop procedures so Visiting Teams can use their time more efficiently. Revised schedule might call for:
   
a. Earlier arrival of team chairperson and team members;

b. Early Sunday afternoon meeting on procedures of visits; and

c. Early Sunday evening meeting to review Standards and methods for gathering evidence and to discuss areas identified through analysis of Institutional Report, team chairperson's previsit, and past accreditation history of the institution's programs.

3. Develop recommendations for increasing the size of the teams.

4. Develop recommendations for extending the team visit by one day.

5. Develop recommendations for new procedures to be used by chairpersons for reaching consensus on whether Standards are met.


II. Increased Access to Levers of Power (External Factors). All recommendations to be reported to the Council for approval at its October 1981 meeting.

A. Consumer Reporting

1. Develop recommendations for providing the public with more information about the accreditation status of schools of education, including those that do not apply for NCATE accreditation. Consideration might be given to:
a. Revision of information in NCATE's Annual List;

b. Publication of information by professional organizations belonging to NCATE (e.g., NEA, AACTE, School Counselors, etc.); and

c. Dissemination of information to key target populations (e.g., high school counselors, college faculty, and national and local newspapers).

2. Develop recommendations for providing the public with information from the Visiting Team Report.

B. NCATE-State Relationships

1. Review current and proposed joint team experiments (e.g., California) and develop recommendations to improve chances for other successful ventures.

2. Explore the potential for developing a relationship with the Education Commission of the States.

3. Review relationships with State Departments of Education to determine
   a. Which Directors require NCATE accreditation; and
   
   b. Which Directors offer NCATE accreditation as an alternative to state program approval.

4. Develop recommendations for strengthening the relationship between NCATE's accreditation process and state program approval procedures.

C. NCATE-Federal Relationships

1. Identify and study legislation providing funds for programs to schools of education.

2. Develop strategies for making program accreditation (e.g., by NCATE) a criteria for eligibility for such funds.

3. Explore the potential effects of requiring program accreditation as a prerequisite for eligibility for Federal funds.

D. Hiring Practices by School Districts

1. Identify school districts that require applicants to come from NCATE-accredited schools.
2. Explore the desirability and feasibility of increasing the number of school districts requiring graduation from an NCATE-accredited institution as a precondition for employment.

E. NCATE's Financial Situation

1. Review sources of present funding to determine problem areas.

2. Develop additional/alternative sources of funding to reduce dependency on institutions NCATE now accredits.
APPENDIX D

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES
This appendix describes the methods and procedures used in this research. Issues such as access to data, sampling design, and model building are also discussed.

1. Access

When NCATE requested a comprehensive study of the accreditation process, it guaranteed access to its own records and procedures to the research group that eventually succeeded in the competition. NCATE fulfilled this promise by providing the researcher unrestricted access to all records, documents, meetings, and discussions. It was mutually agreed that names of institutions observed for this study and institutions contacted as a result of Council denial of one or more of their programs would not be made public. Similarly, it was agreed that anonymity for persons interviewed for this study would be guaranteed. The purposes of these agreements were to facilitate access and to promote frank discussion of the relevant issues.

Because of this unrestricted access, the researcher was able to observe a wide variety of NCATE activities. Specifically, during the eighteen months of field work that comprised this study (May 1979–October 1980), the researcher observed:

- Eight NCATE team visits;
- Fifteen Audit Committee meetings held in conjunction with four Council meetings;
- Council deliberations on all schools applying for accreditation during the period of field work;
- Twenty-one committee meetings (four Executive Committee sessions, eleven Standards Committee sessions, two
Standards Subcommittee sessions, two Process and Evaluation Committee sessions, one Complaint Review Committee session, one Constitution and By-Laws Committee session, and one Futures Committee Session);

- Four informal caucus meetings of special interest groups during Council meetings observed for this study;
- Two training sessions, one for prospective team members and one for team chairpersons;
- Two sets of Appeals Board Panel hearings.

By mutual agreement, staff and Executive Committee meetings at which personnel issues were discussed were not observed. In addition, formal staff meetings were not observed, again by mutual agreement. To ensure that information relevant to this research and discussed at staff meetings was obtained, informal discussions between the researcher and different staff were held following these meetings. During the last ten months of the project, formal staff meetings were held only rarely. Numerous informal meetings between individual staff members were observed when issues pertaining to this research were discussed. Such observation was greatly facilitated by NCATE's provision of office space for this researcher.

Documents pertaining to NCATE's history available in NCATE's archives were reviewed, as were the files of thirty institutions (eight visited by NCATE teams, twenty-one contacted as a result of denial of accreditation between 1974 and 1978, and one to reconstruct a team visit that was not observed). Copies of all documents relevant to NCATE's accreditation procedures were provided the researcher. NCATE's
school accreditation record books were reviewed to obtain data on NCATE accreditation decisions between 1954 and 1978. All NCATE Action Letters were made available, and many were reviewed. Council documents, including Appeals Board Panel decisions and Audit Committee recommendations, were made available and reviewed. Minutes of meetings of the various NCATE standing committees, from their origin to the present, were reviewed. Staff members provided numerous documents relevant to this research from their private libraries, and these documents were reviewed.

2. Design of the Study

During the first three months of research (May–July 1979), the researcher reviewed the relevant literature on accreditation agencies and documents in NCATE's archives pertaining to the organization's history and conducted a series of interviews with persons knowledgeable about the NCATE accreditation process. In addition to extended interviews with NCATE staff, including its previous Director, Council members with long experience in NCATE were interviewed. Officials of the Office of Education's Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation and officials of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation also were interviewed. Attendance at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification provided the opportunity to interview numerous state officials. Each interview focused on the areas respondents felt were most important to study. During this period, fifty-seven interviews were conducted and transcribed.
On the basis of this initial research, the decision was made to revise the original design of the NCATE study (submitted as one of twelve interdependent studies) to focus on the procedures NCATE uses to evaluate programs and the effects of those procedures on the quality of programs in professional education.

3. Methods and Procedures

In following the eight schools selected for study through the accreditation process, a systematic approach to data collection was used to learn how NCATE Visiting Teams, Audit Committees, and the Council functioned. (Procedures for selecting the institutions are described in a later section of this appendix.) Before observation was begun, a written history of each school's accreditation record was developed using documents in NCATE's files. Then an outline of the component parts of each Standard (Preamble and summary) was made. Since it was not possible to observe all team members as they applied various Standards, particular attention was given to team members responsible for applying the Standards in the Curricula family (Standards 2.1-2.5) at the basic level.

Detailed notes were taken on the questions team members asked institutional representatives as they investigated this family of Standards. Since one purpose of the study was to learn how comprehensive the evaluations were, observations focused on whether questions were asked about requirements only in the summary part of the Standards, or in the Preamble as well. Team consensus meetings were observed, which afforded an opportunity to learn whether other team members
had focused primarily on the requirements in the summaries of the Standards, or had also analyzed requirements in the Preambles. Finally, notes were taken on whether team discussions focused on the summary or on both. After each team visit, the notes were analyzed, teams were classified as to whether they pursued only the requirements in the summary part of the Standards or examined requirements in the Preambles as well, and a written summary of the major findings on each team was prepared. Table 1 shows the distribution of Standards evaluated in depth by each team.

The same procedure of detailed note-taking, classifying, and summarizing was followed for Audit Committees as they reviewed institutions observed for this study. Since six of the eight institutions were to be evaluated by different Audit Committees at the June 1980 Council meeting, Dr. James Ruschman, an IRT researcher skilled in participant observation,* assisted the researcher by observing the process for three schools. A common format for data collection and reporting was developed to ensure comparability of information. Council discussions and decisions on each school were observed, and detailed notes were taken on what transpired.

In addition to following eight schools through the accreditation process, the researcher observed many other NCATE activities, as described earlier. Detailed notes were taken on the issues discussed by each committee and the decisions that were made. Similarly, Council debates on each school undergoing accreditation during this period

*Dr. Ruschman teaches graduate courses in methods of field work research in education at Michigan State University's College of Education.
TABLE 1
STANDARDS FOR WHICH REQUIREMENTS
AT THE BASIC LEVEL WERE EVALUATED IN DEPTH

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<td>1 2 3</td>
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<td>1. Governance</td>
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<td>2. Curricula for Basic Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1 Design of Curricula</td>
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<td>2.1.1 Multicultural Education</td>
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<td>2.2 The General Studies Component</td>
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<td>2.3.2 Humanistic &amp; Behavioral Studies</td>
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<td>2.3.3 Teaching &amp; Learning Theory w/ Laboratory &amp; Clinical Exp.</td>
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<td>2.3.4 Practicum</td>
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<td>2.4 Use of Guidelines Developed by National Learned Societies &amp; Professional Associations</td>
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<td>3. Faculty for Basic Programs</td>
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<td>3.1 Competence &amp; Utilization of Faculty</td>
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<td>3.2 Faculty Development w/ Schools</td>
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<td>3.5 Part-time Faculty</td>
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<td>4. Students in Basic Programs</td>
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<td>4.1 Admission to Basic Programs</td>
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<td>4.2 Retention of Students in Basic Programs</td>
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<td>5.2 Materials &amp; Instructional Media Center</td>
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<td>5.3 Physical Facilities &amp; Other Resources</td>
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were also recorded. Following each Council meeting, a written summary of major findings was prepared.

Further, 154 separate interviews were conducted with Visiting Team members, representatives from the eight schools, Council members, and NCATE staff. Many members of each of the eight teams were interviewed and asked to compare their experiences on that team with experiences on other teams. This method provided the opportunity to extrapolate the database on how teams operated to countless teams over the years. Thus, it was found, for example, that members of teams that followed primarily the presence-or-absence approach reported their experiences on other teams were similar to those on the present team. In contrast, members of the team that followed the in-depth approach reported that experience as qualitatively different from those on other teams (see p. 92 in the text). This corresponded with reports from team members who participated on the reconstructed visit described in Appendix A.

Institutional representatives were interviewed on four separate occasions. The primary goal of each interview was to learn what response, if any, the school made to the NCATE accreditation process (e.g., self-study phase, findings of the Visiting Team, and weaknesses reported by the Council). The first round of interviews occurred during the team visit, usually on Wednesday morning while the team was preparing its exit report. (These sessions were devoted to writing; all of the critical Tuesday evening sessions when teams developed consensus on the findings were observed.) The second round of interviews took
place approximately one month after the visit, prior to the Council's
decision. The last two rounds were held after the Council's decision
to approve or deny accreditation, one within a month of the decision
and the other several months later, to allow sufficient time for
changes to occur.

Council members were interviewed to learn their views on
different aspects of the accreditation process, problems that had been
discussed during committee meetings, and reasons for taking certain
positions on specific issues. NCATE staff were interviewed from the
same perspective.

Not counted among the 154 interviews are notes on informal
communications with participants in the process on various issues pert-
taining to this study. Information gleaned from conversations over
lunches and dinners and at evening social gatherings and recorded
immediately afterward provided an additional perspective on how the
process worked.

For the study of the twenty-one institutions with one or more
programs denied accreditation between 1974 and 1978, the following
procedures were followed. First, relevant materials on file at NCATE
headquarters were studied. A written history of each institution's
accreditation record was developed, using findings from earlier visits,
the most recent Visiting Team Report, the Council's Action Letter
denying accreditation, and the institution's response. An open-ended
questionnaire was then constructed to ensure comparability of data while
providing respondents the opportunity to expand on points of special

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interest to them. The questionnaire covered the following areas:

- Perceptions of whether weaknesses cited in NCATE's Action Letter were accurate at the time the team visit and Council action took place;

- Reasons for the existence of these weaknesses (if representatives disputed NCATE's findings, they were asked why they felt the Visiting Team or Council had erred);

- Changes, if any, that had occurred, for each weakness listed;

- Reasons for such changes;

- NCATE's role, if any, in bringing about such changes;

- Additional factors (e.g., other levers of power), that might have contributed to the changes;

- The major developments in the institution's recent history (to learn the context in which change occurred or the reasons why no change was made).

General observations and reactions to the NCATE accreditation experience also were solicited.

A pretest involving two institutions was conducted to test the questionnaire and to determine whether telephone interviews could provide useful data. Interviews with school officials were conducted on-site for one institution and over the telephone for the other.

There was little or no difference in the quality of information gathered, so telephone interviews were conducted for the remaining institutions.

Four interviews were conducted for each of the twenty-one institutions (for a total of 84 interviews). Three were conducted with officials at the institution (central administrative staff, department officials, and department faculty) to provide a cross-check on
perspectives. Generally, perceptions were found to agree; in those few instances where there was disagreement (for example, on whether NCATE had correctly identified weaknesses in a program), the responses of program staff were accorded more weight than those of central administrative staff or department officials, on the assumption that program staff were most familiar with actual program strengths and weaknesses.

The state department official responsible for monitoring the institution was also interviewed to provide yet another cross-check on information, specifically regarding whether changes asserted to have taken place had actually occurred. During those interviews, state department officials also were asked to send copies of the most recent report of state program approval visits to provide an additional check on information. In the few cases where this was not possible, officials were asked to read the relevant parts of the report over the telephone, and notes were taken.

Each interview was written up immediately after completion. A summary of the major points of each case was then developed.

4. Sample design

The procedures used to select the random sample of institutions with one or more programs denied NCATE accreditation between 1974 and 1978 were described in the text (see pp. 135-136) and Appendix B.

The eight institutions and teams followed in the major portion of this study were purposefully chosen to reflect the diversity among schools and teams. Discussions with NCATE staff showed variation
among institutions and teams on several dimensions:

- **Type of school** (large-small; public-private; secular-religious);

- **Race/ethnicity of students** (majority-minority);

- **Geographic location**;

- **Affiliation of chairperson** (higher education-practitioner);

- **Sponsor of visit** (NCATE only or joint NCATE-state visit).

Schools and teams were arranged by these categories and, within the constraints imposed by overlapping schedules, selections were made randomly. One exception was made: To compare team evaluations of the impact of a state-mandated Teacher Center, a small school in the same city and having an identical relationship with the same Teacher Center as one visited two weeks earlier was selected for observation.

After selecting the schools, NCATE contacted school officials and team chairpersons to secure approval for observation. The researcher then called each person to explain the nature of the study, the purpose of observation, and how the results would be used. At that time, it was made clear that the study was being conducted by the Institute for Research on Teaching as a project separate from NCATE's day-to-day policymaking activities.

With the exception noted above, the researcher had no advance knowledge of the teams or the schools. No information on any school was reviewed until after it was chosen. No efforts were made to bias
the researcher to select one school or team over another, and no school or team chairperson refused the request to observe their activities.

5. Model-Building

The models "presence-or-absence" and "in-depth" were developed after the first two teams had been observed. The possibility that some teams might investigate more requirements in greater detail than these first two arose when one team member reported how different an earlier team experience had been, compared with this one as well as others she had had. After a review of NCATE archival material on the school she mentioned, telephone interviews were conducted with other persons who had served on that team. That team visit was reconstructed and identified as possibly a contrasting model. Observation of the remaining six teams confirmed that a different approach was, in fact, sometimes used. (Discussion of the results of that visit appears throughout the text, and the reconstructed visit is described in Appendix A.)

Observation of team visit, Audit Committee, and Council deliberations on these eight schools showed that each approach had a set of characteristics. When one approach was taken, judgments were made on whether a task or function was performed at all, not on how well it was performed. Evaluation emphasis was placed on the summaries of the Standards. Quality indicators (contained primarily in the Preambles) were neither operationalized nor applied, with the result that many requirements were never evaluated. Evidence was gathered and judgments were made on the Standards as if their requirements were discrete entities, and no effort was made to relate requirements in one Standard
to those in another. Accreditation was recommended or denied on the basis of the number of Standards not met. When the other approach was followed, judgments were made on how well a task or function was performed. Quality indicators in the Standards were operationalized and applied, with the result that most requirements in the Standards were evaluated. Evidence was gathered and judgments were made on Standards as they related to requirements in other Standards. Recommendations for accreditation or denial were made on the basis of how much the identified weaknesses, considered together, affected overall program quality.

These sets of characteristics define the two approaches identified—"presence-or-absence" and "in-depth." They also show that the implications of an "in-depth" approach are twofold: more requirements are evaluated, and greater penetration occurs. The question could be raised whether greater penetration could also occur by simply evaluating a summary Standard since some quality indicators appear there (most appear in the Preambles). Such penetration did occur in a handful of cases. The reasons why it occurred rarely are best shown by citing an illustration used in the text (p. 112).

In this case, the team member focused on the phrase in the summary of Standard 2.1 (Design of Curriculum) that called for "explicit" objectives. She spent considerable time searching for such objectives and found none. Under the press of time and peer pressure, she decided to approve the general goal statements she found. Members of other teams who took the Preamble as their starting point were less willing to acquiesce to such pressure. They asked more questions and asked
questions in more areas. In short, approaching both the Preambles and the summary Standard were found to create a set of dynamics that led team members to investigate more requirements and to examine in greater detail the entire program. This point is developed at greater length in Chapter 4.

6. Review of Research Progress and Findings

    From the inception of this project, a core group consisting of
    Dr. Judith Lanier, Co-Director of the Institute for Research on Teaching,
    Dr. Robert Floden and Dr. John Schwille, Professors in Michigan State's
    College of Education, and Ms. Nancy Brubaker, Teacher/Collaborator at
    the IRT, participated in the various phases of the project, from initial
    research design through review of the final manuscript. Every six to
    eight weeks progress reports were made to this group. At many sessions,
    additional researchers were invited to participate, depending on the
    issue being discussed. Most of these sessions were taped and transcribed
    for later review by participants. The Interim Report was reviewed by
    this group, and changes were made on the basis of their comments before
    it was presented to the Council. Prior to the writing of the final
    draft, a meeting was held at the IRT to review the tentative findings
    and the data to support those findings. At this meeting, three addi-
    tional IRT staff participated. Sessions were devoted to review of
    findings and to discussion of possible reforms. From these meetings,
    the reforms proposed in Appendix C were developed. The final draft of
    this report was reviewed by the core group as well as by Dr. Lee Shulman
    and Dr. Susan Melnick.
NCATE staff were involved in every phase of the study. In addition to commenting on the original research design and subsequent modifications, they supplied much information on how different parts of the accreditation process worked, suggested fruitful areas to study, and provided criticism on the Interim Report, an oral summary of the Final Report, and the final draft itself.

NCATE's Planning and Liaison Committee, which originally requested the study of accreditation and chose IRT from a number of competitors, followed this study from its beginning. Their comments and criticisms on the research design, Interim Report, and the final draft were solicited.

Both the Interim Report and the final draft were shared with the Council. At the March 1980 meeting, an oral presentation was followed by distribution of a written interim document. Council members asked questions following the presentation and contributed comments later, either in writing or by phone. The Interim Report contained much of what now appears in Parts I and II of this report.

In response to the Interim Report, the Council established a special subcommittee of the Standards Committee to review that report from the perspective of its implications for NCATE. At the June 1980 Council meeting, this subcommittee spent one and a half days with the researcher, discussing the study, its methodology, findings, and implications for Council activities.

The final draft was discussed extensively at the October 1980 Council meeting. Council members received copies ten days in advance
of the meeting, where the researcher gave an oral presentation, followed by a general question and answer period. The researcher also met with the Process and Evaluation and Standards Committees for extended discussions of specific aspects of the report as well as the recommendations contained in Appendix C. Written and oral comments of Council members were considered by the researcher and the IRT core group, and appropriate changes were made in the final report.

In summary, a process was developed whereby ongoing communication, comment, and criticism from scholars and participants in the process were received at every stage of the project. Such involvement provided a valuable cross-check on the accuracy of the findings presented in the report.
FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1"A Triangular Model for Assessing and Assuring Professional Competence," an address by Lyn Gubser, Director, NCATE, to the 32nd Annual Texas Conference on Teacher Education, Austin, Texas, October 28, 1979, pp. 1, 7-8, 13-14.

2Interviews.


PART I: NCATE'S APPROACH TO ACCREDITATION

Introduction

1Participant observation, NCATE Council meeting, June 18-23, 1980.

Chapter 1

1Interview. See also "Steps to be Followed in the Process of Evaluating a Program of Teacher Education," 1970, NCATE Archives, Washington, D.C. (Xeroxed)


4Ibid.

5Ibid.

6Ibid., p. 6.

7Ibid.
Chapter 2


2 NCATE, Standards, p. 4.

3 Ibid.

4 Participant observation, NCATE team visit, April 6–9, 1980.

5 NCATE, Standards, pp. 6–7.


7 NCATE, Standards, p. 7.

8 Participant observation, NCATE team visit, November 4–7, 1979.

9 NCATE, Standards, p. 8.

10 Participant observation, NCATE team visit, November 4–7, 1979.


12 NCATE, Standards, p. 6.

13 Participant observation, NCATE team visit, February 17–20, 1980.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.


17 NCATE, Standards, p. 7.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

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Chapter 3

1For the classic study in this area, see Robert K. Merton,
"Bureaucratic Structure and Personality," Social Focus, Vol. 17, 1940,
pp. 560-68.

2Elmer E. Schattschneider, The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's

3NCATE, Standards, p. 4.

4Ibid., p. 3.

5Ibid.

6Ibid.

7See Appendix C.

8NCATE, Standards, p. 11.

9Ibid., Introduction.

10Ibid, p. 10.

11Ibid.


13Ibid.

14In addition to these aides, NCATE's Standards Committee drafted
a glossary of terms during 1979. It is presently being pilot tested
in draft form. A review of the draft disclosed that it failed to
define the quality indicators.

15NCATE, "NCATE Standards for Accreditation of Teacher Education:
Evidence Questions" (Washington, D.C.: NCATE, 1979). (Xeroxed)
16 Ibid., pp. 1-2.

17 NCATE, Standards, p. 8.


20 Interview.


22 Interviews.

22 Interviews. During calendar year 1979, the following workshops were scheduled:

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<th>Sponsoring Constituent Associations</th>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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Source: "NCATE Team Training Session" (NCATE Archives, Washington, D.C., p. 1).

23 Participant observation, NCATE team training session, Greensboro, NC, July 12-14, 1979.

24 Interview. In rare cases the size may go as low as seven or as high as fifteen. Also, all NCATE teams are composed of a chairperson and a specialist in the following areas: elementary teaching; secondary teaching; laboratory and clinical experience; academic issues; institutional resources; and teacher education (generalist). For evaluations of institutions that offer both basic and advanced programs in teacher education, a graduate specialist in teacher education (again a generalist) often is added. When school personnel programs are added, specialists in at least two of the three areas—administration, guidance, and counseling—are added. (Interview)

Both the number of days and the size of NCATE teams are a reflection of the amount institutions are willing to pay. In addition to
annual dues, each institution pays the cost of a team visit. Over the years, institutions and NCATE have come to mutual agreement that a team so composed should provide sufficient resources to examine the program(s) without imposing undue financial hardship on the institution. In addition to holding down the number of team members and limiting the number of days, NCATE staff make every effort to hold down costs by selecting team members from contiguous states. No participants are selected from the institution's own state. (Interview)

27 Interview.

28 Interview. NCATE sends more minority evaluators to predominantly black institutions. NCATE lists the following principles for consideration in its Guidelines for Ethical Practices:

1. Personnel making decisions must consider the effects of a close, active association with the institution being evaluated.

2. The principle of double jeopardy should be considered—should a person be involved in the accreditation of an institution in two roles?

3. A third principle relates to the propriety of participating in an NCATE evaluation if one has previously participated in some other accreditation—regional visit, State approval, or other.

4. Consider the disqualifying implications of close personal and/or professional relationships with institutional personnel who are central to the NCATE evaluation of an institution.

5. Special gifts, fees, honors, or monetary rewards from the institution to be visited must be considered as potentially disqualifying.

6. All elements of the evaluation process, including especially the questions and answers which are developed in the evaluation, should be considered by those participating as items to be treated in the most private and professional manner. The safeguarding of the content of discussions, interpretations, and analyses should be considered a professional obligation.

7. Documents, reports, and other materials prepared for an evaluation should be considered in professional terms and treated as private documents in the absence of specific policies which make clear the degree of their exposure. Such materials should not be shown to others nor should they be collected and stored by those participating for indefinite periods of time.

8. Beyond the principles previously enunciated as illustrative of areas of professional behavior, persons should exclude themselves from participating in NCATE evaluation and accreditation activities if they feel there is some other predisposing factor not identified above which might make
them tend to strongly favor or strongly oppose the accreditation of the institution being evaluated.

9. Institutional personnel should exercise professional ethics in dealing with the NCATE process and the participants involved in that process.


39 Interview.

30 My computations from data supplied by NCATE headquarters on team chairperson selection for the academic year 1979-80.

33 Interview.

34 Interview.

35 Interview.


37 Interviews. Participant observation, NCATE Council meetings, June 21-24, 1979; October 4-7, 1979; March 1-3, 1980; and June 18-23, 1980.

39 Participant observation, NCATE team visit, March 24-26, 1980.

39 Participant observation, NCATE team visit, April 6-9, 1980.

50 Participant observation, NCATE team visit, April 20-23, 1980.

41 Participant observation, NCATE team visits, November 4-7, 1979; February 10-13, 1980; February 17-20, 1980; and March 24-26, 1980.

42 Participant observation, NCATE team visits, October 21-24, 1979; November 4-7, 1979; February 10-13, 1980; February 17-20, 1980; March 2-5, 1980; March 24-26, 1980; April 6-9, 1980; and April 20-27, 1980.

43 Interviews.

44 Interview.


Interview with researcher. The chairperson reported he had communicated the same evaluation to NCATE headquarters by telephone.


For example, this researcher did not observe the behavior described above.

Interview.

Participant observation, NCATE team visits, October 21-24, 1979; November 4-7, 1979; February 10-13, 1980; February 17-20, 1980; March 2-5, 1980; March 24-26, 1980; and April 6-9, 1980.

Interview. See also the principles discussed in NCATE's "Guidelines for Professional Participation in Various Council Activities."

Participant observation, NCATE team visits, October 21-24, 1979; November 4-7, 1979; February 10-13, 1980; February 17-20, 1980; March 2-5, 1980; March 24-26, 1980; April 6-9, 1980; and April 20-23, 1980.

Participant observation, NCATE team visits, October 21-24, 1979; November 4-7, 1979; February 10-13, 1980; March 2-5, 1980; March 24-26, 1980; April 6-9, 1980; and April 20-23, 1980.

Tbid.

Tbid. For example, three team chairpersons failed to follow established procedures for reaching consensus which require a discussion of evidence pro and con on each Standard, a decision on whether the Standard has or has not been met, and a listing of strengths or weaknesses. They confused NCATE policy that requires judgments about the level of performance to be stated in terms of strong, adequate, or weak with decisions on whether the Standard had or had not been met. Thus, they explained to team members that if performance were judged weak, then the program would not meet the Standard. Each team spent considerable time straightening out this confusion, since team members pointed out that such a policy could either mean that no weaknesses would be listed if the Standard were judged adequate, or that most Standards could be found not met if at least one weakness were noted. Eventually team chairpersons either moved to stating the Standard as met or not met and then indicating the level or continued with the procedure and allowed team members to list weaknesses under Standards found met at the adequate level.
One team chairperson announced to team members on Monday night that no program changes made since the writing of the Institutional Report could be considered. In fact, NCATE policy requires teams to consider program changes that have actually occurred since the writing of the report, but not promises of change. This policy enables institutions to benefit from the self-study process by encouraging them to correct problems they have identified. Moreover, since the Institutional Report must be submitted to NCATE 60 days before the visit, and since the writing often has been in process for several months, such a policy allows for changes that could not have been included in the original Institutional Report. The result of confusion on this team was considerable: time lost to debate during the Monday evening session and correspondingly less time to discuss the merits of the program under review.

On this team, it took a call to NCATE headquarters on Tuesday to identify the correct procedure.

Another chairperson announced to the team on Tuesday night (the night when final consensus is reached) that he would proceed to develop findings by families of Standards instead of Standard by Standard. Team members protested because such a practice increases the likelihood that all Standards of a family are found met, whereas consideration of each component Standard as a separate entity at least increases the chances that some Standards are found not met. The chairperson proceeded family by family anyway and reported to the school that all families had been met. It was not until he contacted NCATE headquarters after the visit that the chairperson learned of his error and made the necessary corrections in the Visiting Team Report to reflect team consensus that several component Standards had not been met.

57Participant observation, NCATE visiting teams, March 2-5 and March 24-26, 1980. On two teams where the presence-or-absence approach prevailed, team chairpersons encouraged team members to examine a specific Standard in depth because they believed the Council was especially concerned about that Standard. (Participant observation, NCATE visiting teams, February 10-13 and March 24-26, 1980).

58Participant observation, NCATE visiting teams, October 21-24, 1979; November 4-7, 1979; March 2-5, 1980; and April 6-9, 1980.

59Typically, 15 to 18 team reports out of 40-60 reviewed by the Council at its March and June meetings are criticized on these grounds. Participant observation, NCATE Council meetings, June 21-24, 1979; March 1-3, 1980; and June 18-23, 1980.

60Instructions to this effect are given Council members just prior to adjournment to begin meeting in Audit Committees.

61Participant observation, NCATE Council meetings, March 1-3 and June 18-23, 1980.
Innovative programs often provoke an in-depth analysis since their programs generally do not fit neatly into NCATE's Standards.

Participant observation, NCATE Council meeting, March 1-3, 1980.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Participant observation, NCATE Council meeting, June 18-23, 1980.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

For documentation that individuals in similar situations behave in the same way, see Michael Lipsky, Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1980), pp. 82-86 and passim.


Ibid.

March and Simon, Organizations, p. 141.

Perrow, Complex Organizations, p. 143.

March and Simon, Organizations, p. 141.

Chapter 4


NCATE, Standards, p. 6.

Ibid.

Interviews.
PART II: CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRESENCE-OR-ABSENCE APPROACH

Introduction


Chapter 5

1NCATE, Standards, Introduction.


3NCATE Standards, pp. 6-7.

4Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Teams, October 21-24, 1979; November 4-7, 1979; February 10-17, 1980; February 17-20, 1980; March 2-5, 1980; March 24-26, 1980; April 6-9, 1980; and April 20-23, 1980.

5NCATE, Standards, pp. 9-10.

6Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Teams, November 4-7, 1979; February 10-13, 1979; March 24-26, 1980.

7Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Team, November 4-7, 1979.
NCATE policies provide that if the appeal is upheld, NCATE must bear the costs. See NCATE, "New Appeals Procedure Proposed," NCATE UPDATE, Vol. 1, No. 2, April 20, 1979, p. 3.

Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Teams, October 21-24, 1979; April 6-9, 1980; and April 20-23, 1980.

Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Teams, November 4-7, 1979; February 10-13, 1980; February 17-20, 1980; March 2-5, 1980; March 24-26, 1980.

NCATE Standards, p. 3.


Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Team, April 6-9, 1980.

Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Team, April 20-23, 1980.

Interview.

Interview.


Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Chapter 6

College, "College Institutional Report" (December 1979), pp. 40-41. (Xeroxed)

Tbid., p. 35.

Tbid., p. 44.

University, "Teacher Education Institutional Report" (September 1979), p. 4. (Xeroxed)

Interview.

University of ______, "Institutional Report, Volume Two, Program Folio" (n.d.), pp. 5-13; 85, 87. (Xeroxed)

State University, "Teacher Education Programs" (n.d.), pp. 46-47; 319-20. (Xeroxed)


Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Team, November 4-7, 1979.

Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Team, April 6-9, 1980.

Ibid.


NCATE, Standards, p. 6.

Ibid.


Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Team, April 6-9, 1980.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

He did receive some information upon arrival but after reviewing it with the team, judged it inadequate. Participant observation, NCATE Visiting Team, April 6-9, 1980.

"Report of the 'Blue Ribbon' Panel to the Board of Trustees, the President and the Academic Vice-President of the University of ______" (February 28, 1980), p. 60. (Xeroxed)
PART III. THE EFFECT OF NCATE ACCREDITATION ON TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Introduction

1I am grateful to Robert Floden of the Institute for Research on Teaching for his assistance in designing the sample and reporting the findings.
Chapter 7

1 Interview.

2 Interview.

3 NCATE's Executive Committee adopted this policy in 1975. It was discussed and reaffirmed at an NCATE Executive Committee meeting on October 5, 1979. Participant observation, NCATE Council meeting, October 4-7, 1979.

4 See, for example, the Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952, 20, U.S.C. 1141(a) and other legislation.

5 Interviews.

6 Interviews.

7 Interview.

8 Interviews.

9 Interview.

10 Interview.

11 Interviews.

12 Interview.

13 Interview.

14 Interview.

15 Interview.

16 Interviews.

17 Interview.

18 Interview.

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20 Interview.


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Interview.

Programs Lose Accrediting," _____ Post, June 23, 1980, pp. 1; 11.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Letter, _____ to Dr. Lyn Gubser, July 14, 1980, NCATE Archives, Washington, D.C.

Ibid.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Chapter 8

NCATE Action Letter, Rolf W. Larson to _____, October 10, 1974, NCATE Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, _____ to Dr. Rolf W. Larson, December 8, 1975, NCATE Archives, Washington, D.C.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.
Interview.

NCATE Action Letter, Larson to ________, October 12, 1975, NCATE Archives, Washington, D.C.

Interviews.

Interviews.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

NCATE Action Letter, Larson to ________, October 21, 1974, NCATE Archives, Washington, D.C.

Interviews.

Interviews.

Interviews.

Interview.

Interview.

NCATE Action Letter, Larson to ________, October 21, 1975, NCATE Archives, Washington, D.C.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.

Interview.
NCATE Action Letter, Larson to _____, October 10, 1975,
NCATE Action Letter, Larson to _____, October 14, 1965, NCATE
Archives, Washington, D.C.

33 Interview.
34 Interview.
35 Interviews.
36 Interview.
37 Interview.
38 Interview.
39 Interview.
40 Interviews.

NCATE Action Letter, Larson to _____, May 24, 1977, NCATE
Archives, Washington, D.C.

42 Interview.
43 Interview.
44 Interview.
45 Interview.
46 Interviews.
47 Interviews.

NCATE Action Letter, Cubber to _____, February 27, 1979,
NCATE Archives, Washington, D.C.

49 Interviews.
50 Interview.
51 Interviews.
52 Interview.
53 Interview.
54 Interview.

55 My computations from interviews with institutional representatives.
56 Interviews.
Appendix A

1 Interviews.

2 Participant observation, NCATE Council meetings, June 21-24, 1979; October 4-7, 1979; and March 1-3, 1980. Also interviews.

3 Interview.


5 Ibid., p. 4.

6 Interview.

7 "Visiting Team Report, April 1979," p. 5.

8 Ibid., p. 7.

9 Ibid., pp. 18-19

10 Ibid., pp. 41-42.