




THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY,
NY 12234

To: Higher Education Committee
From: Joseph P. Frey 
Subject: Discontinuation of the Regents Accreditation of Teacher Education
Date: August 31, 2010
Authorizations:

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents discontinue offering the Regents Accreditation of Teacher Education (RATE) option to teacher and school leader preparation programs?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State regulation.

Proposed Handling

The item comes before the Higher Education Committee for action regarding whether RATE should be discontinued as an Office of Higher Education activity.

Background Information

In 1998, the Board of Regents adopted a new teaching policy, "Teaching to Higher Standards: New York's Commitment." As a result of that policy, in 1999, the Board adopted Section 52.21(b)(2)(iv)(c) of the Commissioner's Regulations, requiring that all New York State teacher education programs be accredited by an acceptable accrediting organization. Teacher education programs accredited by the Board of Regents are required by Commissioner's Regulations to maintain continuous accreditation once initial accreditation is achieved.

In May 2009, November 2009, and April 2010, it was necessary for the Department to request that the Board extend the accreditation periods of three colleges, four colleges, and seven colleges respectively as their accreditation would end before the Department could receive the necessary budgetary approvals to conduct the accreditation site visits required by Commissioner's Regulations to determine if the colleges' accreditation should continue. To date, three requests to extend the accreditation period for colleges accredited under the Board of Regents accrediting process, Regents Accreditation of Teacher Education (RATE) were necessary due to budgetary constraints.

We have experienced the same budgetary restraints in the 2010–2011 that occurred during 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 fiscal years.

An additional result of the lengthy, but necessary, extension periods is the decreasing number of site visitors available for visits, as cuts to the budget eliminated our ability to pay for additional site visitor training. By the time OHE received the needed budgetary approval in FY 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, identifying team members able to commit to the visit was difficult and there was little time to assemble a team of reviewers before the end of the college's term.

At its May 2010 meeting, the Regents Higher Education Committee discussed the viability of continuing the Regents Accreditation of Teacher Education (RATE) given the continued extensions, State fiscal environment, and assignment load of the Teacher Education Team (TET). TET staff time (16 days per visit) would need to be allocated to conduct the visits and would impact staff capacity to meet the expectations of the high priority Regents and Department initiatives focused on teaching and school leadership reform, including the implementation of the Great Teachers and Leaders portion of our Race to the Top grant award.

The attached document, Transition of Regents Accreditation of Teacher Education, lists the RATE colleges, their accreditation expiration dates, and their projected date for achieving accreditation should the Board decide to discontinue RATE, based on results of our conversations with the leadership at NCATE and TEAC, and the need to provide sufficient time for our RATE institutions to meet the expectations and standards of a new accreditor. To accommodate the colleges in meeting the new accreditation process, it is suggested that the RATE colleges with accreditation periods expiring within three years of the Regents vote be required to achieve accreditation by either NCATE or TEAC by December 31, 2013 and those with later expiration dates must achieve accreditation by the expiration date of the RATE accreditation. There may be a need to adjust these dates in order to accommodate the redesign of the education program accrediting agencies, the development of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, the name of the new body that unifies NCATE and TEAC), and the capacity of CAEP to complete increasing numbers of accreditation visits in New York and across the nation.

RATE colleges have contacted the department requesting information and guidance regarding accreditation choices once RATE is discontinued. Some have already changed their accreditation choice and are working toward meeting the standards adopted by their new accrediting agency. Information is available through the NCATE and TEAC web sites and both agencies have agreed to provide informational meetings in which representatives from both accreditors will participate. Additionally, both accrediting agencies will be presenting information at an informational session during the fall 2010 meeting of NYSATE/NYACTE.

Also attached is a summary of comment received from RATE accredited colleges.

Recommendation

We recommend that, due to the budgetary and staffing constraints of the State's current fiscal environment, the Regents discontinue the Regents Accreditation of Teacher Education as an accreditation option for teacher and school leader preparation programs in New York State. In order to meet the program accreditation requirement in Commissioner's Regulations, RATE institutions will be required to achieve accreditation through one of the two nationally recognized teacher education accreditation options, NCATE or TEAC, by December 31, 2013 for colleges with accreditation dates expiring within three years. For those colleges with accreditation expiring after December 31, 2013, accreditation must be achieved before the expiration of their RATE accreditation period.

Attachment A: Transition of Regents Accreditation of Teacher Education (RATE)

Institution	RATE Expiration Date	Recommended RATE Extension Date *	Note
School of Visual Arts	October 22, 2010	December 31, 2013	--
Cazenovia College	May 17, 2011	December 31, 2013	--
Hobart & William Smith Colleges	May 17, 2011	December 31, 2013	--
St. Joseph's College – Brooklyn Campus	June 21, 2011	December 31, 2013	--
St. Joseph's College – Suffolk Campus	June 21, 2011	December 31, 2013	--
Boricua College	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
Mercy College – Bronx Campus	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
Mercy College – Main Campus	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
Mercy College – Manhattan Campus	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
Mercy College – Yorktown Heights Campus	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
Roberts Wesleyan College	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
Skidmore College	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
St. Francis College	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
Touro College – Main Campus	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
Touro College – Flatbush Campus	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
Yeshiva University	June 30, 2011	December 31, 2013	April 2010 Regents Item Extension
Marist College	December 16, 2011	December 31, 2013	--
Ithaca College	December 16, 2011	December 31, 2013	--
Barnard College	January 10, 2012	December 31, 2013	--
College of New Rochelle	March 14, 2012	December 31, 2013	--
Wells College	March 14, 2012	December 31, 2013	--

Institution	RATE Expiration Date	Recommended RATE Extension Date *	Note
New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University	November 1, 2012	December 31, 2013	--
Vassar College	December 8, 2012	December 31, 2013	--
Daemen College	January 9, 2013	December 31, 2013	--
Pratt Institute	January 9, 2013	December 31, 2013	Pending focused site visit decision (current expiration date: January 9, 2009)
Sarah Lawrence College	January 9, 2013	December 31, 2013	--
Elmira College	June 19, 2013	December 31, 2013	--
Keuka College	June 19, 2013	December 31, 2013	Pending focused site visit decision (current expiration date: June 19, 2009)
Bank Street College of Education	October 16, 2014	--	--
Marymount Manhattan College	December 13, 2014	--	--
D'Youville College	September 10, 2016	--	--

* Recommended date; may need to be adjusted to allow for the capacity of national accreditors and institutions to complete the required accreditation visits and accreditation decision process.

Attachment B: Summary of RATE Responses

A memorandum was sent to the 31 RATE institutions on July 29, 2010, to solicit feedback on the transition of RATE accredited colleges to NCATE or TEAC accreditation. The RATE institutions were asked to respond to two questions:

- 1) What information do you need from the Department in order to smooth the transition; and
- 2) What information do you need about NCATE and or TEAC to enable you to make an informed choice between these two accrediting agencies?

The deadline for responding was August 31, 2010 and the Department received questions and comments from six institutions. The following is a summary of their questions /comments and the response of the State Education Department.

Institution Questions/Comments

1) Information needed from the Department

- When will RATE be phased out?
 - Response: Currently, the Department is proposing a December 31, 2013 date for RATE accredited colleges to meet new accretitor standards. During that time, the institutions will be required to continue meeting the RATE accreditation requirement of submitting annual reports.
- What is the timeline regarding transition from RATE to NCATE or TEAC?
 - Response: See above
- Will RATE continue its accreditation if an institution needs more time to make a decision concerning choice of the new accrediting agency?
 - Response: Colleges will be expected to achieve accreditation through the new accrediting agency by the December 31, 2013 date. Both TEAC and NCATE anticipate that colleges will be able to complete requirements within a two year period.
- What is the deadline to make a decision about the accreditation agency choice and what is the process to notify the Department? Does the State notify NCATE or TEAC or does the institution?
 - Response: The colleges will need to apply to their new accrediting agency as candidates during the fall 2010 semester. A copy of their letter of intent to the accrediting agency should be sent to the Office of College and University Evaluation.
- Will institutions receive a RATE extension to maintain accreditation status? What would be the length of the extension? What programs would the extension apply?

- Colleges whose RATE accreditation expires before December 31, 2013 will have their accreditation extended to that date in order to allow sufficient time to work toward the new accreditation. All teacher and leader preparation programs leading to certification must become accredited within the timeframe identified in Attachment A.
- Will teacher certification be granted to candidates until such time as institutions' application to the new accrediting body has been accepted?
 - Response: Yes. The ability for program completers to receive recommendation for certification will continue during the transition period.
- Will the annual RATE report continue?
 - Response: Yes. The RATE accredited colleges will be required to continue the annual reports while their RATE accreditation is in effect and until a new accreditation status is established.
- What are the significant differences between RATE, NCATE, and TEAC?
 - Response: The RATE and NCATE processes are similar. When TEAC was first developed and approved as an accreditation choice by the Board of Regents, there were significant differences between TEAC and the other two processes. However, over time and in conjunction with the redesign initiative to develop CAEP, these differences have decreased in scope including the size of the teams and lengths of visits. Additionally, NCATE has moved toward a more outcomes (data driven) based process that is more aligned with the TEAC accreditation process. Most significant is the fact that the NCATE process in NY still requires submission of program reports to the Specialty Professional Associations (SPAs) for program review against the national standards of the SPAs that are adopted by NCATE. The TEAC process is very strongly data driven. This information will also be provided to institutions at the information sessions that will be made available to RATE colleges.
- How do the NYSED regulations align with TEAC and NCATE?
 - Response: Commissioner's regulations align with both NCATE and TEAC standards and 80 of the State's preparation colleges have achieved accreditation through either NCATE or TEAC.
- Will the Department provide a list of NY institutions who participate with NCATE or TEAC and the year of each institution's initial accreditation?
 - Response: This information is available on the NCATE website and through contacting the TEAC office.
- What oversight will NYSED maintain in the accreditation process? What will be the relationship between NYSED and NCATE or TEAC?
 - Response: NYSED has a protocol agreement with both NCATE and TEAC and these protocols are available in their respective websites.

NYSED is in constant communication with both accrediting agencies regarding all aspects of the NYS institution accreditation process.

- Will the State Education Department maintain the certification testing program?
 - Response: Yes. However, as a part of the Race to the Top activities, the certification test program is being revised and satisfactory completion of newly designed examinations will be required in the future.
- Will there be training available regarding the transition? Will materials concerning NCATE and TEAC accreditation be circulated to the RATE institutions? Will the Department provide information sessions about NCATE, TEAC, and the new entity CAEP?
 - Response: Yes. The Department is working with both agencies to determine how best to meet the informational needs of RATE accredited colleges.
- One respondent commented that five year transition seems to be more feasible considering that the consolidation of NCATE and TEAC is still in flux.
 - Response: Colleges have, through the RATE process, been required to provide evidence and data responding to the effectiveness of their programs and should be able to adjust quickly to meeting the standards of their new accreditation choice, The redesign of NCATE and TEAC will not impact on this ability as all colleges, whether RATE, TEAC or NCATE accredited, will enter into the transition schedule established by the boards of TEAC and NCATE,
- One institution commented that workshop for representatives of current RATE schools organized by NYSED and conducted by the two accrediting organizations would be an important part of the transition. This institution indicated that it would be happy to volunteer to organize and host such a gathering on the campus in the summer of 2011.
 - Response: The Department agrees and intends to organize one or more informational workshops. This will have to occur in fall 2010.

2) Information needed about NCATE and TEAC

- Whom should institutions contact at NCATE and TEAC?
 - Response: The institutions may use the following contact information: TEAC's Vice President for Membership, Rebecca Pelton at rebecca@teac.org, 302-831-6072 or NCATE's **Dr. Yi Huang** Vice President for Accreditation, at yi@ncate.org, (202) 466-7496.
- What is the fee schedule of NCATE and TEAC, including the associated agencies?
 - Response: This information is available on their respective websites: NCATE www.ncate.org and TEAC www.teac.org

- What is the process of NCATE and TEAC? Specifically, institutions would like to know the following information:
 - Response: This information is available on their respective websites: NCATE www.ncate.org and TEAC www.teac.org to address the nine bullets below.
 - materials that are required for submission for application and accreditation;
 - types and formats required for documentation of an institution's program, policies, and procedures;
 - the number of years worth of data required for either accreditation;
 - institutional information required beyond that of the programs being reviewed;
 - access to a template;
 - differences in the accrediting bodies' student entry requirements for a Master of Science in Education (i.e., mandated GPA, undergraduate liberal arts requirements, tests, etc.);
 - significant differences in program faculty qualifications and requirements between NCATE and TEAC;
 - differences regarding the practicum requirement;
 - the recommended capstone options; etc.
- What are the top priorities set by an agency when reviewing an institution?
 - Response: This information is available on their respective websites: NCATE www.ncate.org and TEAC www.teac.org
- Is one agency more commonly subscribed to than the other?
 - Response: There are 53 NCATE accredited institutions and 28 TEAC accredited institutions in New York.
- What would be the length of time needed to prepare for a review?
 - Response: Both NCATE and TEAC report that accreditation may be achieved within a two year period.
- What are the most common challenges institutions realize as they initiate the accreditation process with an agency?
 - Response: This question will be addressed during informational sessions.
- What are the most common shortcomings for institutions that are not accredited or receive "conditional" accreditation?
 - Response: This question will be addressed during informational sessions.
- After the discontinuance of RATE, the RATE institutions have to apply for NCATE or TEAC. Does NCATE or TEAC anticipate establishing a system of

- prioritizing NY accreditation applications? Would there be specific additional accommodations made for those institutions associated with RATE?
- Response: NYSED will work with the institutions and the accrediting agencies throughout the process to address any scheduling concerns in order to ensure each institution meets the continuous accreditation requirement.
 - Do most institutions have a dedicated person to coordinate the accreditation process?
 - Response: The accreditation process should be coordinated by a person that will ensure continuity and consistency. This was true for RATE accreditation as well.
 - If the Department continues to maintain the certification testing program, would NCATE or TEAC (or the new entity CAEP) accept those scores, or would institutions have to switch to PRAXIS?
 - Response: NCATE and TEAC already accept state certification score data as one source of evidence of program effectiveness
 - How does the proposed reconfiguration of NCATE and TEAC impact institutions' accreditation in terms of timeline, requirements, etc.?
 - Response: The redesign of NCATE and TEAC will not impact on this ability as all colleges, whether RATE, TEAC or NCATE accredited, will enter into the transition schedule established by the boards of TEAC and NCATE,
 - Is CAEP's proposed division into two commissions conceived of as a long-term solution, or an interim one? If interim, which commission is more likely to persist? What will the relationships be between CAEP's two commissions and Specialized Professional Association (SPA)?
 - In the consolidation report it is stated that NCATE and TEAC would create CAEP as a new membership corporation. For up to two years. NCATE and TEAC would be CAEP's members and the Design Team, with additional members, would serve as CAEP's interim board of directors. This interim board represents both NCATE and TEAC and both would continue their separate accreditation activities on an independent basis, although in a highly collaborative fashion. During this transition, CAEP would be funded equally by NCATE and TEAC. When the Interim Board concluded that actual consolidation was possible, both organizations would be formally consolidated into CAEP – a new accrediting organization with two accrediting commissions that offer the nation's institutions a choice in the processes by which they may become accredited. Under CAEP, both accreditation processes will continue to exist.
 - Would NCATE and TEAC, and the new entity CAEP provide information sessions?

- Response: NYSED, TEAC and NCATE will work together to develop information sessions that will accommodate the RATE colleges and their schedules to the best of our ability. TEAC and NCATE are already planning to present such a session at the October 2010 meeting of NYSATE/NYACTE.

Department Response

The Department appreciates the institution's responses. Staff will work with NCATE and TEAC to provide answers to their questions and comments. An informational Question and Answer (Q & A) document addressing these questions and comments will be sent out to the RATE institutions by October 31, 2010.