Maggie Foran

The Evergreen State College Certification Officer, Associate Director Teacher Education Programs

foranm@evergreen.edu 260.867.6559

Tab 5 – Annual Endorsement Program Review

The proposed process and rubric for annual endorsement program review is problematic as currently designed.

Using WEST E scores as a primary measure to evaluate the robustness of endorsement programs at certifying universities/colleges is a violation of the original purpose of the WEST E test. The WEST Teaching Manual 2012-2013 states on pg. 5 under Purpose of the Washington Educator Skills Tests “The explicit purpose of the WEST-E is to help identify candidates with the required content knowledge for Washington’s endorsements.” (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2bHo3NTb_bJbHNiUEZpM1oyLW8/edit?pli=1>) PESB has set the required content knowledge score at 240. Applicants being recommended for beginning certification or added endorsements only needed to meet this standard. In addition, scores were not to be used to rank applicants for teaching positions (PESB’s testing director informed principals and human resource directors of this policy), and this policy was also honored by only having scores reported as passing or not on the OPSI e-cert database. To now track endorsement programs and label them as low performing if their endorsement completers have WEST E scores at one standard deviation or below the state average was not the original purpose of the WEST E test.

Setting a policy using WEST E scores to flag endorsement programs with passing but low WEST E scores compared to state averages, invites abuse in the use of the scores and strays from their original purpose. While certification programs are encouraged to admit high-quality candidates, they may become reluctant to admit candidates with WEST E scores below the state average if these scores would then be used to rank their programs as substandard and in possible need of a further self-study as directed by PESB, with the possibility of losing endorsement program approval. Many master’s level MiT and some alternative certification programs already have passing WEST E scores as an entrance requirement. The presumption is that the content knowledge is already possessed by the candidate upon program entry, and the certification program will assist the candidate in developing curriculum planning, assessment and teaching methodology for the endorsement area, but will not be having the candidate do further coursework to develop their content knowledge. In these cases, the content knowledge was generally gained in the undergraduate degree of the candidate, and so the WEST E score does not reflect the content knowledge gained by the candidate in the certification program. Thus, why evaluate the certification program on content knowledge of candidates gained elsewhere? PESB’s own strategic plan (tab 20) mentions under the “What more/next/different to accelerate progress toward the outcome” sections for goal 1A (p.2) and goal 1C (p.6) a bullet which would require passage of the WESTE for admission into post-baccalaureate teacher preparation programs. If passing WEST E tests becomes a mandated policy for post-baccalaureate programs, then why would a program admit anyone with scores below the state average?

I’m sure my colleagues in certification programs at the baccalaureate level also have concerns about having to devote more time and resources to assist their candidates in being prepared to obtain WEST E scores at least at the state average level, in order not to jeopardize their being evaluated at as a “1” on the proposed rubric.

I am also concerned that evaluating endorsement programs primarily through test scores, does not take into account the mission and conceptual frameworks of programs. For instance, a program may have a genuine commitment to reach out to underserved populations and attempt to increase the diversity of its candidates. The program may thus choose to admit and/or certify more candidates with passing, but low WEST E scores in order to accomplish its mission and commitment. Given the trends in the annual PESB assessment reports, if programs were to not admit candidates at least at the state average, then they would likely decrease their numbers of diverse candidates. This practice would conflict with PESB’s own strategic plan goal 5.

I am not against endorsement programs being reviewed for adequate rigor, but I am opposed to the current methodology as proposed to rank endorsement programs by WEST scores. There are other quanitative and qualitative measures which could be examined and used for endorsement program review.

Tab 7 Data Manuals for Annual Program Data Collection (please note your manual is dated 6/1/14 and that date has not yet occurred!)

As one who 1) recruits and advises prospective applicants to our MiT program, 2)oversees the admissions process including preparation of data on each applicant for the Admission’s committee review, and 3) collects, aggregates and reports on program data, and prepares annual PESB reports, I am quite interested in the proposed Selection Data Manual. I have listened in on, and contributed input during the data webinars on the manual’s development. I still have concerns about some elements needing clarification, and the increase workload in collecting additional elements.

One item that is unclear is the definition of cumulative gpa – does this gpa need to be only for one’s BA or BS degree, or credits attempted toward initial degree thus far? Or could it mean gpa calculated on all post-secondary credits attempted, including endorsement work and/or master’s degree work completed post-baccalaureate level (this occurs in MiT applicants for instance).

Another concern as expressed before is that the proposed element of a gpa calculated “using the most recent last 45 quarter-based credits or more” (p. 15 in 6/1/14 version you are considering) is unclear – what does “or more” mean if the intent is to have a consistent measure across programs? Currently the gpa calculated on applicants for our MiT program follows the 1998 minimum admission standards for graduate and professional school as set by the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board for Washington state public baccalaureate institutions which states “Beginning with the 1999 fall term, students seeking regular admission to the graduate programs or to their first professional degree programs would be required to have a minimum grade-point average of 3.0 in the last 90 graded quarter hours or the last 60 semester hours. Graduates of The Evergreen State College or other institutions not using a grading system would be exempt from the GPA minimum requirement but would have to submit equivalent measures of performance…Under this proposal an institution could still admit up to 10 percent of an entering class of a graduate or professional school under alternative standards.” Thus, if the 45 credit reporting requirement is instigated, then I will have to calculate multiple entrance gpas, quite a time commitment. Too, if PESB decides to chart and compare entrance gpas on certification programs, can I be assured BA or BS completers from Evergreen would be accurately portrayed and accounted for in information footnotes?

In general, the selection manual as proposed is fine but I would recommend approval only after further discussion on the concerns expressed above, and modifications and clarifications to address the concerns.

Tab 8 Presentation and Discussion: Components for the Annual Program and Workforce Data Report

In the proposed draft list of elements for this annual report, it mentions under the Candidate and Educator Knowledge and Skill category the desire for WEST-E scores by demographics. Currently the WEST-E scores are not reported by individual in current PESB reports. Given the small numbers of minority candidates in many programs, I am concerned about FERPA protections and that minority candidates could be personally identifiable if WEST-E scores were reported by ethnicity categories. It is different when WEST B scores are aggregated for all takers across the state by ethnicity, the numbers assure anonymity. That is not the case for WEST-E scores. Too, it is proposed the WEST-E scores be used to identify differences between and among programs. My objections are similar to my comments under tab 5 about this practice would invite abuse in admissions policies and is counter to the original purpose of the WEST-E.

Another problematic proposed data element is under Production, Hiring and Retention: “how long it takes to get hired. ” Obtaining information about that element would be difficult, and making inferences based on length of time to employment from original certification could be flawed by not taking into account multiple factors, such as personal choice of time off from job-seeking.

Tab 10 – Proposed Revisions to the Science Endorsement

While the proposed competencies are quite thorough and will be challenging to implement, especially some of the engineering applications, I am not opposed to them. My concern is about the timing and process of revising competencies, and the hope that the process will be done in the future with better consideration of length of time and timing of comment periods. The announcement about the draft competencies available for review and the letter from the PESB staff member while dated 3/14/14, did not get announced until an email about PESB announcements went out at 9:55 am 3/17/14. The period for comments was until 4/1/14, giving only 9 and a half work days to disseminate information and get information back to PESB. The timing was quite unfortunate, as it was evaluation week here at Evergreen and faculty were consumed with evaluation conferences and writing narrative evaluations, followed the next week by spring break when they were off contract and not on campus. So, while I did forward the competencies to over 43 science faculty for comments, only two responded and not in time to meet the PESB deadline. Two weeks is a very short time for faculty to respond anyway, I would recommend at minimum of 3-4 weeks, especially if that time period encompassed any academic breaks.

Tab 15 Reconsideration of Timeline for Transition from WEST-E to NES Assessments

In 14.05.16 TAB 15\_aNES DelayWESTvsNES TestList\_PL.docx the chart aligning the current WEST-E elementary education subtests to the NES elementary subtests is incorrect. It appears to show current WEST E 1 is aligned to NES subtest 1. Actually, WEST E 1 is aligned to NES 2, as shown correctly in the chart in the NES document 14.05.16 TAB 15\_eNES DelayPearson’sResponse\_PL.pdf

Tab 19 Proposed Rule Change: Assignment Policy

Is the “ table of courses with course matched with endorsements” codes referred to in the revised WAC language available to preparation programs? This information would be useful for guiding applicants in appropriate job-search and even in recruiting candidates.

Tab 20 FY’14 Progress on PESB Strategic Plan

Under goal 5B, Address barriers to entry into educator preparation programs disproportionally affecting underrepresented populations and in the actions/innovations/accomplishments section, there is a bullet which reads “2011- PESB supported two colleges of education through Special Projects Grants to work on creating online WEST-B test prep modules….PESB is not aware of efforts in the state to provide effective WEST-B test preparation online.”

PESB never asked The Evergreen State College if we were aware of any on-line WEST-B test preparation materials, and if asked, we would have informed PESB we have been contracting with a vendor for several years for our prospective students to use on-line tutoring and sample tests to prepare for the WEST-B. We are satisfied the materials have been helpful.

Tab 21 Recruiting Diverse Teacher Candidates Report Intentions and Implications

It is stated this report “shall consist of the following items: ….

* Summary of existing preparation efforts in the state and other diversity efforts and materials that exist with Washington Teacher Preparation Programs”

The Evergreen State College has not heard from the contractor developing this report about what information is wanted, when, and in what form. We hope to be informed soon, so we can respond with accurate information in a timely manner which takes into consideration this most busy time of year with certification and graduation approaching in the next month.