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College of Education earns re-accreditation on national and state level

MONMOUTH – The high quality of Western Oregon University’s College of Education teacher preparation programs was proven again as it was recently re-accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) until 2014. Western's teacher preparation programs have earned continuous accreditation from NCATE since 1954, the longest out of the six accredited institutions in Oregon.

In addition, Oregon's Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) recently voted to grant unconditional approval to WOU's teacher preparation programs until 2015. Both NCATE and TSPC conducted a five-day site visit in October and commended WOU for meeting all standards.

"Seeking and achieving the most rigorous national accreditation standards for our teacher preparation programs has been a tradition at Western Oregon University for over 50 years," said Hilda Rosselli, College of Education dean. "Not only does this achievement speak to our faculty and staff's hard work and dedication but it also reflects WOU's desire to provide the highest quality curriculum for students enrolled in our programs."

NCATE currently accredits 623 institutions, which produce two-thirds of the nation’s new teacher graduates each year. Ninety-nine institutions are candidates or pre-candidates for accreditation.

Teacher candidates must have in-depth knowledge of the subject matter that they plan to teach as well as the skills necessary to convey it so that students learn. The college or university must carefully assess this knowledge and skill to determine that candidates may graduate. The institution must have partnerships with P-12 schools that enable candidates to develop the skills necessary to help students learn. Candidates must be prepared to understand and work with diverse student populations. College and university faculty must model effective teaching practices. And the school, college, or department of education must have the resources, including information technology resources, necessary to prepare candidates to meet new standards.

NCATE revises its standards every five years to incorporate best practice and research in order to ensure that the standards reflect a consensus about what is important in teacher preparation today. In the past decade, NCATE has moved from an accreditation system that focused on curriculum and what teacher candidates were offered, to a data-driven performance-based

system dedicated to determining what candidates know and are able to do. The new system expects teacher preparation institutions to provide compelling evidence of candidate knowledge and skill in the classroom. Multiple types of performance assessment are expected throughout the program of study. Candidate qualifications are assessed upon entry, and candidate competence is assessed throughout the program as well as prior to student teaching/internship work, and before completion of the program.

The U. S. Department of Education recognizes NCATE as a specialized accrediting body for schools, colleges, and departments of education. NCATE is composed of more than 30 professional and policymaker organizations representing millions of Americans committed to quality teaching. It was founded in 1954 by the teaching profession and the states. NCATE continues its mission today: the profession and the states working together for excellence in teacher preparation and development.

For more information about the College of Education teacher preparation programs, please visit www.wou.edu/education. More information about NCATE is available at www.ncate.org.

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