AACTE Response to 2021 NCTQ Report

We at AACTE are dedicated to serving as a national voice and resource on behalf of the educator preparation profession. In anticipation of the National Center on Teacher Quality's (NCTQ) release of yet another round of flawed ratings for educator preparation programs, AACTE re-asserts its long-standing belief that the NCTQ model of program evaluation lacks the multiple-accountability, science-based measures necessary to assess teacher preparation program quality legitimately and accurately.

NCTQ evaluations methods are superficial, subjective, and short-sighted. NCTQ ignores more useful, revealing, available data such as federal Title II disclosures and science-based performance reports published by many states, and instead bases its conclusions on course catalogs, syllabi, observation forms, degree plans, and student teaching/district agreements, without direct dialogue or input from faculty. As such, the ratings NCTQ assigns programs are nothing more than shallow, incomplete, and subjective interpretation.

As a case in point, for the recent set of ratings on admission standards, NCTQ used institution-wide ACT/SAT score means for many of the institutions. As you know, these scores are not necessarily the scores for students in the teacher education programs, given that, at the institutional level, such scores only reflect the status of students when they are admitted to the institution. Because not all the students admitted persist in the program, scores at the time of admission to the institution tell nothing about the scores of those who do persist to program admittance and eventually to graduation.

Additionally, we believe NCTQ's superficial evaluative methods can have potentially counter-productive consequences. In the forthcoming report, NCTQ will administer ratings against program diversity and admissions standards. Given the quality of NCTQ's previous work, we do not anticipate that any ratings assigned in the newest report will accurately reflect the work being done by programs to address these challenges.

AACTE's work in this area, in partnership with our members, reaches beyond program diversity and seeks to impact the broader PK-20 landscape. The unprecedented challenges of remote and hybrid learning environments have undoubtedly required innovative approaches to preparing teacher candidates for a vastly different instructional context. It has also reaffirmed the need to prioritize preparing teacher candidates to address the systemic racism that exists in our education system. We do not expect NCTQ to capture and accurately reflect the innovations undertaken by institutions to address these challenges.

Together, we can combat the subjective and potentially harmful work of NCTQ. AACTE encourages its members to share their own research, grounded in data-driven decision making, and evidence demonstrating the efficacy of their programs with their local and state communities. AACTE will continue to lead conversations at the national level and elevate the great work happening at our member institutions across the country. We believe we must collectively engage in open dialogue about what quality educator preparation looks like while pushing for greater transparency and objectivity in the NCTQ review process.