

June 19, 2013

Arthur McKee
Managing Director, Teacher Preparation Studies
National Council on Teacher Quality
1420 New York Ave, NW , Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005

Arthur,

At Brandman University, the top priority is providing our students with a quality education. While we applaud your efforts to focus on teacher preparation reform and ensuring that only high quality teachers are placed in schools (goals that we share as well), we are saddened that NCTQ has decided to rank teacher preparation programs with methodology that has been widely criticized by researchers and academic leaders as lacking validity. We strongly disagree with the assessments given to our Elementary and Secondary graduate credential programs. Furthermore, Brandman University was evaluated for an undergraduate elementary teacher credential program which does not exist. We request this evaluation to be immediately removed from your website.

Brandman University, formerly Chapman University College and part of the Chapman University System, has been committed to providing high quality teacher, administrator, and service professional preparation for over 50 years. Below are some highlights of our programs that you failed to include in your analysis:

- 1) **CCTQ Independent and Valid Evaluation of Brandman Programs:** The **California Center for Teacher Quality (CCTQ)** conducts evaluations and reports evidence in effort to strengthen the outcomes and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. Employers, university supervisors and graduates all provide feedback in this comprehensive evaluation of how well Brandman University prepared our candidates for teaching. For nearly 10 years, the CCTQ has presented comprehensive evidence of Brandman University's effectiveness in teacher education and we have attached highlights produced by CCTQ from the September 2012 report as well as the methodology articulating the validity and reliability of the results. In addition, graduates are not only highly sought after by most of our 500+ school district partners, but are frequently honored with "Teacher of the Year" & "Administrator of the Year" accolades by school districts as well as professional associations and have even been bestowed the honor of National Teacher of the Year in the United States which is a testament to our preparation success.
- 2) **Strong Accreditation:** Despite our long and distinguished history as an accredited California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) institution, we are keenly focused on continuous program improvement to ensure that our students are graduating from "Gold Standard" programs. To that end, we are voluntarily seeking national unit accreditation (NCATE/CAEP) as well as Specialized Professional Association (SPA) recognition to continue to ensure our graduates are maximizing their learning and effectiveness in the classroom. We anticipate that after our scheduled Spring 2015 joint CCTC/NCATE(CAEP) site visit, that we will be awarded not only CCTC reaccreditation, but NCATE/CAEP National Unit Accreditation as well as National Recognition of several of our programs.

- 3) **Common Core Focus:** Our curriculum has been modified over this past year so that our candidates will graduate being “Common Core Ready” well in advance of the 2014-15 Common Core implementation in California. We expect this realignment to not only ensure that our candidates are well versed in implementing the Common Core, but will be highly valued Common Core “teacher leaders” at their schools upon hire.
- 4) **Focus on Clinical Partnerships as Recommended By NCATE:** Brandman University is one of the few private universities to be a member of the California Alliance for Teacher Education which was developed as part of a recommendation from the November 2010, Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning. In fact, over the past year, Brandman has signed additional MOUs with School Districts across the state to develop new university lab schools and have afforded district staff university support to maximize both student and candidate learning.
- 5) **Expert Practitioner Faculty:** Our faculty are highly regarded expert practitioners who are also evaluated annually for their service with schools/districts and accrediting bodies to ensure that our programs are serving the district needs and to remain highly current. In addition, all of the School of Education leadership and one-third of the faculty serve as members of the CCTC Board of Institutional Reviewers not only as a service to the profession, but to also ensure that there is a high level of understanding by the faculty of state requirements and to focus on continuous program improvement at all levels.
- 6) **Leader in Instructional Technology:** Brandman University is the leader in the evolution of adult learning with a keen focus on technology and innovation. Our courses are evaluated according to the Quality Matters rubric criteria and are consistently updated to focus on assurance of learning. Brandman faculty are experts in utilizing best practices in blended learning which has led to the development of an Instructional Technology: Teaching the 21st Century Learner program. This program was developed after numerous school district requests to share our knowledge about instructional technology best practices for teachers to utilize in the classroom to maximize student learning. This is especially important with the impending Common Core implementation.
- 7) **Doctoral Program Focusing on Education Transformational Leadership:** Finally, we also believe that education reform is necessary and are not sitting back waiting for the change to occur, but instead are taking an active role in leading the change. In the summer of 2011, after significant research and community stakeholder feedback, we received WASC approval and accolades for the development of our now highly regarded Doctor of Education degree in Organizational Leadership with a keen focus on Transformational Leadership and Change. This program is unique as it has an interdisciplinary focus - Education, Business, Healthcare, Nonprofit –to develop leaders who are committed to making transformational change within their organizations to better prepare students for 21 century learning.

Arthur, we are confident that your organization has altruistic motives to better inform students in the important decision-making process. Unfortunately, your evaluation of Brandman University programs is woefully inaccurate and we want to work with you to rectify that evaluation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Christine G. Zeppos
Dean, School of Education