June 21, 2013

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

Dear Mr. McKee:

This letter is written on behalf of the Texas Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (TACTE). Our organization is comprised of deans of education at both public and private universities throughout the State of Texas. The primary goal of the TACTE is to promote effective teaching and quality education through research based efforts to improve teacher education, the teaching profession, and schools. TACTE member institutions work in harmony with the objectives of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the standards of teacher preparation as they apply in and for the State of Texas.

The members of TACTE embrace strong accountability measures based on regulatory, empirical and best practice (theory) standards. Teacher preparation programs in Texas have Teacher Preparation Advisory Councils or Committees which include in their membership constituents from the public, employers, and school districts which are regularly informed about and provide input into requirements, standards and conduct of teacher education. In addition, member institutions regularly contribute faculty and others to various state and other efforts to address issues of delivery and assessment as well as accountability and routinely adopt practices and policies which exceed state minimum standards. Finally, individually and collectively we engage in and consume valid research and technical reports based on or utilizing empirical methods and founded on or contextualized by sound theoretic frameworks to improve the quality of our teacher preparation programs.

This NCTQ study is marred by inaccurate criteria, incomplete and indefensible data collection, flawed research methodology and untenable and unsupported determination of criteria and standards with which we mostly disagree. The results of the NCTQ study do not accurately describe and can’t measure the quality of the teacher preparation programs since this “study” does not consider the most basic measure of accountability--the teaching performance of our graduates. Consequently, the report and rankings are misleading, exaggerated or quite often completely wrong.
Our concerns with the NCTQ report as it currently exists are:
    a. The standards and criteria used by NCTQ to evaluate and rank teacher preparation
       programs are not aligned with our state and national standards. These state and national
       standards include outcomes data, not just input.
    b. There is no meta-research base linking NCTQ criteria to improving teaching and
       learning outcomes.
    c. NCTQ is focused on measuring program inputs through public document reviews
       rather than measuring the actual outputs of programs through sound research methods.
       Reviewing course syllabi, admission standards, textbooks and handbooks will not reveal
       data sufficient to make judgments concerning the quality of programs.
    d. Program quality judgments are being made even though there are so many unresolved
       issues surrounding the reliability and accuracy of data collected by NCTQ and the
       validity of inferences they draw from the data.

NCTQ was created in 2000 in opposition to traditional teacher training and its report reflects its
    strong bias against higher-education based teacher preparation. There are too many unanswered
    questions around the NCTQ report related to its efficacy, methodology and accuracy. This is
    exemplified most recently by the manner in which it proposes that errors of fact and findings will
    be addressed after publication. It is clearly obvious that any corrections will not have the impact
    or influence of the initial publication of findings. Why would NCTQ allow erroneous
    information to be published in the first place without taking easy measures to prevent it?
    TACTE repudiates the NCTQ report and its rankings.

Sincerely,

Dr. Denise Staudt, Dean
University of the Incarnate Word
TACTE President

Dr. Robert Rhodes, Provost                 Dr. Tim Perrin, President
Dr. Donnie Snider, Dean                  Dr. Susan Blassingame, Dean
Dr. Dana Pemberton, Chair                Dr. David Boyer, Associate Dean
Abilene Christian University              Lubbock Christian University

Dr. Tim Summerlin, President             Andre Hampton, J.D., Provost
Dr. Charlie McCormick, VAAP               Dr. Janet B. Dizinno, Dean
Dr. Neva Cramer, Director of Education    Dr. Dan Higgins, Department Chair
Schreiner University                      St. Mary’s University
Dr. Glenda Ballard, Dean
Texas A & M University—Texarkana

Dr. John Miazga, Dean
Angelo State University

Dr. George Fair, Dean
University of Texas-Dallas

Donna Harrell Lubcker, Dean
East Texas Baptist University

Dr. Gail Johnson, Dean
Texas A & M University Commerce

Dr. Jerry Thomas, Dean
University of North Texas

Dr. Miguel Angel Escotet, Dean
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Dr. Matthew Capps, Dean
Midwestern State University

Dr. Grant Simpson, Dean
St. Edwards University

Dr. Hollis Lowery-Moore, Dean
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Dr. Perry Haley Brown, Dean
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Dr. Wayne Jacobs, Dean
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Dr. Stan Carpenter, Dean
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