CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM REPORTS
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During fall 2004, NCATE initiated a pilot review program that required programs to submit program reports via a newly-revised electronic template. This pilot review also focused on key assessments that would focus on each SPA standard, while providing data for valuable program change.

Successful reports submitted in the fall 2004 cycle had three strengths in common –

• **First, assessment and scoring guides were appropriate instruments for measuring the depth and breadth of candidate abilities as described by standards.** For example, an assessment based on grades in required content courses provided a clear description of the content of those courses, as well as a scoring guide that distinguished the characteristics of possible grades awarded to candidates. Comprehensive assessments, such as unit plan assignments or a portfolio-based review, were designed to evaluate the quality of candidate artifacts or products, as opposed to being a checklist of items that the candidate needed to include in a final product. Such assessments focused on standards-defined objectives, and less so on the organization and presentation of materials.

• **Second, each standard was comprehensively addressed by at least one assessment, or component of an assessment.** Reports used a range of focused assessments that substantially addressed specific standards of a subset of standards, as opposed to creating or choosing assessments that superficially addressed a large number of standards.

• **Third, successful reports provided clear evidence of the alignment of assessments to the SPA standards.** Alignment was much easier to demonstrate when it was embedded in the assessment itself. However, assessments that are “external” (licensure tests, state-based student teaching evaluations) must be supported by information on the alignment of test items to specific standards. Another characteristic is that they used Section IV of the report template to argue convincingly that information derived from the assessment provided solid evidence of meeting standards.

Commonalities Among Program Reports Not Meeting Expectations

• **A “promising” assessment was rendered a useless source of evidence because the scoring guide did not provide clearly stated descriptions of the scored variations, and/or because data were not reported.** For example, giving a numerical rating of 4 for outstanding performance and a rating of 3 for satisfactory performance is meaningless unless “outstanding” and “satisfactory” are clearly defined, preferable in direct relationship to the program area and standard being addressed.

• **Some reports did not provide data beyond statement to the effect that “our candidates do well on this assessment,” or “all candidates much succeed on this assessment in order to move forward in the program”**