

Bringing National Board Standards to the Preparation and Certification of Teachers:

Portraits of Four Universities Participating in the Washington Initiative

Laura Stokes
Jenifer Helms

With assistance from:

Mark St. John
Dianne Maxon
Dawn Huntwork

JULY 2004

INVERNESS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University Role in the Washington Initiative

A primary goal of the Washington Initiative has been to increase the numbers of National Board certified teachers in Washington by offering candidates scholarships and systematic group support. Responsibility for providing candidate support was given in 2001-02 to the University of Washington and Washington State University, and in 2002-03 to Pacific Lutheran University and Eastern Washington State University. Individual Education faculty members co-facilitated support groups alongside NB certified teachers. Designers of the Washington Initiative hoped that universities' participation would contribute positively to candidates' experience, and would also provide a mechanism by which faculty members – and by extension their colleagues – could gain deeper understanding of NBPTS practices and standards. This understanding could then assist them in reviewing and further developing their programs for teachers. In particular the designers of the WI hoped that university participation would enhance university development of programs for the new Professional Certificate.

Documentation Study

Inverness Research Associates conducted a study in 2003-04 for the purpose of documenting the perspectives of participating faculty members on their experiences with WI candidate support groups and on the ways in which NBPTS standards and practices are making a contribution to Education program development on their campuses. The full report includes two sections. Section One summarizes findings across the four universities and reflects on prospects for sustaining the work. Section Two includes individual portraits of how the WI work and contributions unfolded at each university.

Key Findings

The university faculty members who participated directly in the WI had prior knowledge of the NBPTS or interest in it. By co-facilitating support groups they developed greater appreciation for the quality of the teachers and the rigor of the NB standards and portfolio requirements. They also gained firsthand in-depth understanding of the specific elements of the NB process that provide teachers with such a valuable professional growth experience. They further developed new collegial relationships with teachers. These benefits, together, served as a catalyst for these faculty members to refer to, and draw from, the NBPTS process as a model as they participated in the review and development of Education programs in their departments.

Across all campuses, discussions about similar kinds of changes took place. These included adaptation of NB-like practices of documenting teaching effectiveness for undergraduate certificate programs (where they exist) and Professional Certification programs (all campuses). These are the two program areas where the WI participation is likely make the most pervasive contributions. On some campuses new courses were developed to provide students with the kinds of training they need to fulfill these new requirements. Conversations also concentrated on the Education master's degree; these were focused on re-thinking how the NBPTS portfolio relates to the master's thesis or project. Discussions about the master's tended to be more

tentative and contentious than those connected to the Pro Cert, and potential changes are likely to emerge more slowly as pilots or alternatives.

While conversations across the campuses focused on similar implications for change, the extent to which actual changes have been made or are under serious discussion varies greatly. At Pacific Lutheran, substantial changes have been made with considerable faculty support and formal involvement of NBCTs as consultants. At Washington State, participating faculty feel that potential changes to programs are at early stages of discussion. At the University of Washington and at Eastern Washington University, some changes are underway as pilots and others are under serious discussion.

Key factors affecting the dialogue and pace of change include:

- the size, pre-disposition, and culture of the faculty, including the dean and influential professors;
- the design of the WI project on each campus and the presence of an effective strategy for engaging influential faculty; and
- the role of NBCTs as advisors and spokespeople.

The Long-term Promise

Many of those we spoke with espouse a vision of a seamless continuum of professional growth and a seamless profession of K-12 and University educators. For them (and some of their colleagues) the Washington Initiative is serving as a potent resource for moving that vision closer to reality. With respect to the new Professional Certificate specifically, the influence of the WI is likely to make a positive contribution to the quality of professional support that new teachers gain. This has benefits both for those individuals and for the teaching profession in the State.

Prospects for Sustaining Momentum

Experiments aimed at carrying on some form of candidate support without external funding are underway on each campus and most faculty are optimistic. However, the ability to sustain the momentum gained is not at all certain, especially in those programs where less predisposition was in place and serious discussions of change are just beginning. We believe that it would be wise to establish formal structures for ongoing dialogue, especially sharing of lessons learned. These could be created on each campus, as well as perhaps through the Washington Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (WACTE), and/or the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP), or other entities.

SECTION ONE: CROSS-CASE FINDINGS AND REFLECTIONS

I. THE RATIONALE FOR INVOLVING UNIVERSITIES IN THE WASHINGTON INITIATIVE

The Nature of the University Role

The Washington Initiative for National Board Certification of Teachers (WI) had twin goals. One goal was to increase the number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in Washington state by providing candidates with scholarships for application fees and with systematic support in preparing their portfolios. The second goal was to support a leadership network of NBCTs and promote their role as agents of positive change in schools and districts.

Institutions of higher education that prepare teachers were seen as integral participants in the Washington Initiative from its inception.¹ The group that designed the WI included representatives from universities as well as the K-12 sector, and a substantial proportion of WI funding went directly to participating universities for their role. The IHE role – administered through Colleges, Schools, or Departments of Education² on each participating campus – was to design and manage the support system for WI-supported NBPTS candidates. This involved establishing a syllabus for the support groups as a course for academic credit and organizing regular meetings throughout the year. As a key element of this role, individual university faculty members were hired to co-facilitate – with a NBCT – the meetings of the candidate support groups.

The University of Washington (UW) and Washington State University (WSU) were the first two universities to participate, starting in 2001-02. Both are large public universities with established Education programs granting teaching certificates, master's degrees, and doctorates. Over the three years of the WI grant (2001-02 through 2003-04), UW supported 200 candidates total, and WSU supported 175. In 2002-03, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) and Eastern Washington University (EWU) each received WI grants to provide support to candidates. PLU is a small private university, and EWU is a public university; both grant bachelor's and master's degrees in Education. In their two years of participation, PLU supported 125 candidates, and EWU supported 75.³

Intended Purposes of University Involvement

The designers of the Washington Initiative involved universities for a number of reasons. Fundamentally, this role created a mechanism enabling university faculty to interact personally with NBCTs and with NBPTS standards and practices of professional development. The

¹ Background information for this report is drawn from personal communication with the WI director, WI program documents, and a 2002 internal report prepared for the WI: Joelle K. Jay: "The Washington Initiative Programs for Supporting National Board Certification: A History of Program Development."

² The organizational units that house Education include Colleges, Schools, and Departments. For simplicity's sake, we use the term "Education department" or simply "Education."

³ Actual numbers supported are 2-5% less because of natural attrition. In 2003-04, Western Washington University joined the WI, supporting 25 candidates. WWU was not included in this study.

assumption was that university faculty members would make a positive contribution to the support of NB candidates. Beyond that, the hope was that participation in the WI would increase faculty members' familiarity with NBPTS standards in a way that might ultimately make a positive contribution to the review and strengthening of Education programs. As one of the WI architects put it:

We wanted to make it possible for university faculty to learn about the National Board in a way that was experiential in nature. And as they learned more about it, they would begin to see the programmatic possibilities.

More specifically, it was hoped that university involvement would enhance Education programs' development of courses and programs for the new Professional Certificate (Pro Cert). In establishing the Professional Certificate, Washington policy makers at the K-12 and higher education levels espoused a vision that the process of professional certification would not be a program based on "seat time" in courses, but rather would mirror the National Board process of teacher reflection on practice and demonstration of competence with evidence. The hope was that working with NBCTs in the WI would provide Education faculty with a model support mechanism that could be adapted for Professional Certification programs. Additionally, university involvement in the WI held the promise of facilitating new and stronger institutional partnerships among universities, schools, and districts.

This Study: A Documentation of the University Perspective

We at Inverness Research Associates⁴ were contracted by the Washington Initiative to conduct a series of evaluation and documentation studies over the three-year course of the Initiative. During the first year (2001-02) we studied the quality of the university support system and the perspectives of candidates for purely formative (improvement) purposes. During the second year (2002-03) we surveyed candidates in support groups to assess their perspectives and to measure improvement in support group quality, again for formative feedback to WI and university staff. During the third and final year, we shifted our focus to document the perspectives of university faculty in a more summative fashion. This is a report of that study.

Our purpose was to portray the perspectives of university faculty on the following:

- ◆ To what extent and in what ways was participation in the WI of value to the participating faculty?
- ◆ What contributions, if any, did participation in the WI make to the review and development of Education programs?
- ◆ What issues and questions arose from this work?

⁴ For more information, see inverness-research.org. Additional studies for the Washington Initiative included a survey of NBCT leadership and case studies of NBCT-led change in schools and districts. These reports are available at inverness-research.org and cstp-wa.org.

- ◆ What are the prospects for a continuing university role beyond the sunset of the WI grant?

To carry out the study, we interviewed the coordinator of the WI program on each campus as well as other key faculty members who were involved, and we reviewed relevant program documents and web-based materials.

This Report

We envision this report as being of interest to those who have been directly involved in this work. For funders, we hope that it provides insight into the returns on their investment in university participation. For the universities involved, we hope it helps document progress gained and prospects for continuing to collaborate with NBCTs in the preparation and support of teachers, as well as helping to identify issues that bear continued attention. For the broader audience, we hope it contributes some insight into the benefits and challenges associated with K-12/university collaboration, including the effort to form a more seamless K-16 teaching profession.

This report is divided into two major sections. In this Section One, we present patterns of interaction and benefit that occurred across the four universities, examine the factors that affected how the work unfolded in varying ways on the different campuses, and reflect on issues related to sustaining university Education programs' constructive interaction with National Board standards. Section Two includes detailed portraits of how participation in the WI unfolded at each university.

II. BRINGING NBPTS STANDARDS TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Schools or Colleges of Education in the four universities differ from one another in many substantial ways, and yet they have a similar broad responsibility to contribute positively to the quality of the teaching force in Washington. When we began this study, we had few expectations about the extent to which faculty perspectives across the four campuses would be consistent or would vary. Would they all tell a version of the same story? Or would they tell largely different stories?

What we found was that the faculty members who worked alongside NBCTs to support candidates had quite similar – and similarly positive – experiences with the project. While some of them have questions about some aspects of the National Board itself⁵, they were uniformly impressed with the teachers they came to know and with the rigor of the process candidates

⁵ The university faculty whom we spoke to uniformly praise the NBPTS standards themselves, believe in the value and stature associated with the NB certificate, and believe that the process of preparing the portfolio involves teachers in rigorous and high-quality reflection on teaching practice in a way that not only documents, but enhances, their effectiveness as teachers. They have concern, however, about the portfolio evaluation criteria, the general trend across the nation of disparate certification rates across ethnic groups, and the lack of flexibility in defining a one-year application period. These concerns are focused on the NBPTS itself, not the Washington Initiative. Faculty are strongly supportive of the WI effort to support teachers in their candidacy and to situate that support within universities.

undergo as they prepare their portfolios. Also, we heard similar ideas from the participating faculty about the ways in which National Board standards and professional development practices could (or should) be linked to improvements and changes in Education certificate and degree programs. We heard differences, however, in their portrayal of the extent to which participation in the WI had already begun to serve as a catalyst and resource for change. That is, while some of the possibilities are similar, the universities are on different trajectories of actual development toward program revisions that embrace NBCTs, NBPTS standards, and NB-defined professional development practices. In this section we summarize the trends; to gain an appreciation of the changes underway and the dynamics at work on each campus, we refer you to the individual portraits in Section Two.

The Washington Initiative as a Resource for Improvement

Contributing to a “Seamless Profession”

Several faculty members on different campuses, when speaking about their own vision or their department’s vision for Education, referred to a “seamless professional development continuum” and “a seamless professional community.” From these faculty members’ perspectives, the WI served as a resource they could use to help bring these visions closer to reality.

- ◆ The university faculty approached their role as co-facilitators with respect for teachers and interest in forming relationships, and that is exactly what they experienced. The WI has created new collegial relationships among higher education faculty and leading teachers in Washington. This helps to build – and to serve as a model for – a seamless K-16 profession. These relationships have begun to create productive opportunities for both groups in ways that vary across the campuses. Working with teachers in the support groups has brought university faculty in closer touch with the realities of teacher practice and professional development, and helped faculty members gain greater access to local schools and districts. At PLU, several NBCTs have been invited to serve as a standing committee of advisors to the faculty, in this way formalizing and extending the new collegial relationships.
- ◆ Facilitating the work of WI candidates gave faculty members firsthand, in -depth knowledge about the nature and rigor of the reflective process that NBCTs undergo to document their effectiveness as teachers. While several faculty members had prior knowledge of the NBPTS and were well-disposed to view it favorably, they had not previously had an opportunity to gain this degree of understanding. Thus, the WI provided university Education faculty with a concrete model for exemplary teacher development throughout a teacher’s career. For several faculty members, the NBPTS standards and professional development practices have become a key frame through which to view teacher learning, from the undergraduate pre-service level all the way through professional certification and on to the master’s degree and NBPTS certification. As such, these faculty have embraced some core NBPTS processes – such as reflection and inquiry, examining student work, using evidence, articulating practice – as key components of a “seamless continuum” of professional growth for teachers.

These two results – the forming of new collegial relationships in which NBCTs are experts and colleagues, and the embracing of a NBPTS-like model of professional development – have the potential to work symbiotically to foster program development in Education departments. To varying degrees, conversations and program changes reflecting these outcomes are indeed underway.

Contributing to Program Development in Education

Although the four universities vary somewhat in the programs and degrees they offer, we heard similar themes when we asked participating faculty about how participation in the WI might be relevant to program improvement and development in their departments. These faculty – and to varying extents, their colleagues – see core elements of the NB process as a model that can be adapted for and embedded in a range of programs. The extent to which program changes are actually underway varies substantially from campus to campus.

- ◆ Some undergraduate teacher preparation programs are moving toward a more reflective, NBPTS-like “documented entry” approach for the assessment of teaching candidates. At PLU, for example, the entire assessment system at the undergraduate level in the College of Education has been restructured to incorporate portfolio-like writing and reflection tasks that require students to connect course content with their field experiences in documented entries. A group of NBCTs were invited to assist faculty in conceptualizing these changes. At EWU, a similar approach is being offered as a new alternative, again with the advice of NBCTs.
- ◆ Participation in the WI is having a significant impact on the design and delivery of professional certification programs in these institutions. The WI was a key resource for faculty who were responsible for the Pro Cert programs, providing examples for them to draw upon in designing their programs. In fact, at three of the campuses, the person responsible for coordinating the WI was the same person responsible for leading the Pro Cert program – and this was a deliberate linkage. The WI is likely to leave a strong stamp on these Pro Cert programs as a lasting legacy.
- ◆ On every campus, participation in the WI and work with NBPTS standards and practices has put pressure on the existing master’s programs for teachers. The nature of the pressure varies across the cases, but the general trend is that both NBCTs and the faculty members who work directly with them are calling into question the value of the “traditional” master’s degree thesis or project. From their perspective, the NBPTS portfolio is both more rigorous and more valuable to teachers as they advance their practice. In one program a small pilot is underway that will allow master’s candidates to submit a NBPTS portfolio as the final master’s project. In the others, conversations among faculty are occurring that might lead to this alternative, and in some master’s, the portfolio project carries some credit toward the thesis.⁶ In all cases, it was the faculty

⁶ Substituting the portfolio for the thesis may be discouraged by the NBPTS. In an email communication a NBPTS representative noted: “There are no universities that we are aware of that accept the portfolio in lieu of a master's thesis. As a matter of fact, we discourage universities from having teachers submit to them their portfolio because the portfolio is property of NBPTS once it is submitted and the release forms

working with the WI that introduced proposals for change to their colleagues; some have invited NBCTs to make presentations directly to the faculty. At this point, it is not clear the extent to which changes in the master's will persist. There are several dynamics at work, including market pressure from teachers and university faculty conceptions of appropriate academic work for the advanced degree, and we cannot predict how these forces will continue to interact.

- ◆ On some campuses, in response to the programmatic changes described above, new Education courses or course components have been developed that focus on alignment of teaching with assessment goals, and on strategies for examining student work and documenting learning. These courses change the ways students are trained to demonstrate what they have learned and how they qualify for the teaching certificate, Pro Cert, or master's degree.

Factors Shaping the Use of the WI in Education Programs

There is similarity in the ways in which participating faculty have gained personally from their experience in the WI, and in which they envision NBPTS standards and practices serving as a model and catalyst for program improvement. However, the actual trajectory of program development varies substantially across campuses. At Pacific Lutheran, substantial changes have been made with considerable faculty support and formal involvement of NBCTs as consultants. At Washington State, participating faculty feel that potential changes to programs are at early stages of discussion. At the University of Washington and at Eastern Washington University, some changes are underway as pilots and others are under serious discussion. In this section we explore some of the factors that appear to influence the extent to which the WI is serving as a resource for Education program improvement and development on the campuses. We want to emphasize that these factors do not function independently of one another; rather, they interact in complex and varying ways. Thus we present these as broad patterns and rely upon the four portraits in Section Two to convey the particular dynamics on each campus.

- ◆ Elements of university institutional context played a role in the extent to which participation in the WI contributed to development in Education programs.

In smaller universities or departments, participating faculty could more easily create awareness of the WI and NBPTS and more faculty involvement than they could in larger universities or departments. The mission of the university and of Education programs—i.e., the degree to which they emphasized practice over research, the kinds of degrees offered—shaped the degree to which WI had an influence. Those universities or departments that put a high value on practice and were comfortable as consumers of research and best practices seemed more disposed to innovate within their programs drawing on the NBPTS.

signed by the parents of students who are featured in these portfolios essentially state that their children's work will be used for assessment purposes only.”

- ◆ Elements of Education department context played a quite powerful role.

The Dean's vision for Education, previous experience with the NBPTS, and leadership during the WI grant strengthened the awareness and involvement of the faculty in two universities. In the one case where there has been some movement toward change without the direct support of the dean, strategic involvement of influential faculty members working in a relatively small department helped clear the way to pilot activity. At the University of Washington, which is large and research-oriented, the fact that the vision of the Dean is consistent with the National Board helps to mitigate some of the effects of size and mission.

The cohesiveness of faculty culture, and the extent to which there was broad acceptance of new professional standards and policies had an effect on the pace of conversation and extent of change. The WI seemed to have a more pervasive influence in departments where the faculty often work in collaboration or are disposed to embrace projects that bring them into contact with new standards for teacher preparation and support, including NBPTS standards. Further, in the departments where the WI project coordinator was embraced and where faculty saw the WI as a resource for themselves, there was greater infusion of NBPTS practices. In one university where there is less cohesiveness in the faculty and less acceptance of new standards policy, the WI coordinator mitigated this effect by developing a deliberate strategy for infusing conversation about NBPTS standards and NBCT experience into meetings.

The extent to which the WI presented a solution to a departmental priority or problem affected the level of faculty engagement and the nature of the influence(s). For example, all schools of Education are facing the development of Pro Cert programs; the timing of the WI and its congruence with the State's vision for the Pro Cert requirements helped smooth the way for NBPTS professional development practices to serve as models for the Pro Cert. On some campuses, some faculty members were already wondering about the strength of the master's degree, and their new-found understanding the NBPTS portfolio helped them begin making the case for change. On the other hand, where faculty members are strongly committed to existing programs, especially the master's degree, the WI does not serve as a resource, but instead introduces a point of contention.

The quality of relationships between the Education department, local districts, and leading teachers affected the extent to which new collegial relationships could quickly take hold and have a ripple effect. Where departments had existing institutional and collegial relationships, the WI work built upon this foundation, and progress toward infusing NBPTS standards into programs moved at a faster pace. In those departments where key faculty had existing collegial relationships with leading teachers in the local area, teachers were more readily embraced as critical friends and teaching colleagues.

- ◆ The design of the WI program, and the presence of a strategy for linking it to faculty interests, affected the degree to which participation in the WI led to program changes or serious discussions.

The project coordinator's prior knowledge of NBPTS and teacher development, the degree to which s/he was embraced by faculty, and the extent to which s/he could work within the faculty culture to initiate engagement with the WI or serious discussions of change were all notable factors. Where the WI was considered an "add on" to the department, it was less well known beyond those directly involved, unless the Coordinator developed an effective strategy for bringing it into core Education program discussions. The stature of the faculty members involved (whether on the tenure track, and in some cases rank) was a factor. Further, the extent to which at least some faculty had prior knowledge of the NBPTS, and the general level of awareness among the entire faculty, determined to some degree the extent to which NB processes and concepts could be infused into courses and programs or at least seriously discussed.

The proximity of NBCTs, their roles, and faculty perceptions of them were important factors. At all of the sites, NBCTs were held in high regard and greatly appreciated for their contributions to the support groups. In those cases where NBCTs were invited to play additional roles – such as facilitators of Pro Cert courses, program advisors, spokespeople for the NBPTS process, professional development leaders, or adjunct instructors – the degree of influence of the WI and the NBPTS was substantially enhanced.

III. REFLECTIONS ON PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

Washington Initiative funding for candidate support ends in June 2004 after three years. For two of the four universities involved, involvement lasted only two years. From 2004-05 onward, universities are expected to design ways to offer some form of support for NB candidates that does not require external funding support. As summarized above and spelled out in detail in the individual portraits, the Education departments are at quite different places on a trajectory toward full embrace of NBPTS standards as a model for their own programs, toward deliberate involvement of NBCTs as key advisors and colleagues, and toward recognition of the large pool of teachers as a potential market for Education programs that link degrees to NB certification. In this section we reflect on the potential long-term benefits of bringing NBPTS standards and practices to the preparation and certification of teachers, and on the prospects for sustaining momentum begun by the Washington Initiative.

The Long-term Promise of University Participation in the Washington Initiative

Many of those we spoke with hold out a vision of a professional community of educators that spans K-12 and universities, a community in which school teachers and professors work side by side to advance knowledge and improve practice, all for the purpose of serving students. They also speak of a continuum of professional growth opportunities for teachers that begins with a strong undergraduate experience and spans a career of ever-developing classroom practice and leadership for educational improvement. The Washington Initiative has served as a mechanism that can bring NBPTS standards and practices to the preparation and support of teachers, and can bring NBCTs into university programs as advisors and co-teachers. Faculty members with these visions thus recognize that participation in the Washington Initiative is helping them come closer to making this vision a reality. The long-term promise of the Washington

Initiative – if the momentum begun can be sustained – is thus that it can make an important contribution to strengthening the teaching profession in Washington.

Prospects and Challenges

- ◆ Prospects for enhancing the development of new teachers. While NBPTS candidates certainly stand to gain from their affiliation with university faculty – especially if their portfolio fulfills master’s thesis requirements – it is newer teachers who stand to benefit the most from university involvement in the WI because of the extent to which the WI facilitated universities’ development of Pro Cert programs and, where relevant, undergraduate programs. The WI is serving as a vehicle that links the vision of the Pro Cert to the NBPTS model, and as a critical resource that can help bring that vision closer to reality. In other words, the WI has been, in effect, a “carrier” of NBPTS standards and professional development practices into universities (and districts’) efforts to develop Pro Cert programs. Thus, teachers new to teaching or new to Washington will have access on these campuses to course work and support designed to prepare them to document their practice effectively.

The benefits for the new teachers are both short- and long-term. In the short term, they are likely to be more successful in fulfilling the “documented entry” requirements effectively if they are trained to do so by NBCTs and university faculty who have in-depth knowledge of the process. In the long term, they are likely to have developed habits of reflection and articulateness about teaching that will stand them in good stead during their careers. Comparable benefits accrue to undergraduates as they enter the profession. Ultimately, these benefits to new teachers translate into a strengthened profession.

- ◆ Impact on the Education master’s degree. Perhaps the most complex and ambiguous line of discussion in Education departments is the relationship between the existing master’s degree and NBPTS candidacy and certification.⁷ Unlike the Pro Cert, the master’s is well established and defined: it has been the professional certification that has brought a pool of teachers to the university as paying consumers and that has helped teachers gain financial compensation. The mutual financial benefit remains strong. However, this study has uncovered a line of discussion in which the “teacher quality and value” benefit of the master’s may be open to question. That is, some university faculty members are judging for themselves, and also hearing from NBCTs, that the NBPTS portfolio and content assessment are both more rigorous and more valuable than an Education master’s. This puts pressure on the master’s, as we noted above.

Within some Education departments, changes have already been made in master’s programs; in others, conversations about the relationship of NBPTS to the master’s are quite contentious. The future is uncertain. If discussion of change gains momentum in

⁷ We should note that some Pro Cert programs are designed as Pro Cert plus master’s. Some faculty believe this link makes their Pro Cert programs more marketable. In these cases, the relationship of NB certification to a master’s is even more ambiguous.

the profession – particularly among teachers, who constitute the market – the pressure on the existing master’s may increase. Currently, however, Board certification and the master’s sit in an un-defined relationship, begging for further experimentation and documentation.

- ◆ The challenge of sustaining momentum without external funding. In those universities where WI participation is serving as a vehicle for constructive program review and development, most faculty members we spoke with expressed optimism that university support of NBPTS candidates and work toward infusion of NBPTS practices into programs will continue beyond the grant. At the same time, in most cases there is not yet a fully formed plan for sustaining the work without funding; rather, there are some relatively small-scale experiments underway. The reality is that the external funding played a strong role in linking NBPTS standards to universities, and three years is a short period of time to make inroads into strong institutions, even when some readiness is in place. The trajectory of change and the degree of will within Education departments varies substantially across campuses for the reasons we cited above. Thus, while it may be true that “where there is a will, there is a way,” we hesitate to predict the extent to which all campuses will be able to sustain momentum without some external source of support or strong State sanction.

Potential Strategies for Sustaining the Conversation

The prospects for sustained university commitment may be enhanced if mechanisms are created for further documentation of lessons learned and benefits of this work and these relationships. We think it would be beneficial if deans, key faculty members, and NBCTs representing these campuses could share lessons learned not only with one another, but also their colleagues in other Education programs around the state. The Washington Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (WACTE) may be an entity that could sponsor this work. Another potential sponsor (or co-sponsor) is the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP).

It may also be beneficial for each campus to create a standing council of NBCTs and faculty to sustain joint K-12 and university conversation. Two of the universities have developed some version of this already, and the others could benefit from their experience.

Finally, it may be wise for the Washington Initiative or the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession to create a standing statewide policy committee of NBCTs who have an interest in fostering development of a sustainable K-16 professional community in Washington, as well as strong university-district partnerships that provide a continuum of professional development for teachers.

SECTION TWO:

Profiles of Four Participating Universities

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**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AND
UW-BOTHELL PROGRAM IN EDUCATION**

“It is very good to have UW faculty members in National Board candidate support groups as co-facilitators, because they really come to understand firsthand the teachers’ work and really come to appreciate it.”

—*UW College of Education faculty member*

I. BACKGROUND

UW Programs in Education

The UW is a publicly funded research institution. The UW College of Education offers graduate degrees only, including a Master in Teaching (or M.I.T., which prepares students for Washington’s residency teaching certificate); a Master in Education (M.Ed.); a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.); and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). UW also offers the professional certificate program for second-level teacher certification as well as a principal certification program (Danforth) and superintendent certification (Leadership for Learning-Ed.D. program). UW produces a relatively small proportion of Washington’s residency certificates. The UW-Bothell satellite campus has an Education Program that offers an undergraduate Education minor, a post-baccalaureate resident teaching certificate, a professional certificate (coursework for which applies to the M.Ed.), and a M.Ed. Faculty members of both UW and UW-Bothell have been involved in the Washington Initiative.

Feedback that faculty receive suggests that their graduates are well prepared and that UW programs address the kinds of current and real issues that schools and districts are facing.⁸ There are a number of ways in which the UW College of Education has tried to organize itself to support faculty working together across research specialties, and this is a point of pride in the faculty. For example, virtually all faculty participate directly in the preparation of teachers rather than having separate faculty for credential programs and for advanced degrees. Similarly, virtually all faculty work together on doctoral programs. Outside of Washington, the UW College of Education is well respected for its leadership in research and the preparation of educational leaders.

⁸ Faculty interview. Data for this study included individual interviews with faculty members and the dean, UW program documents, and a written account of the history of IHE participation. All quotations are from interviews; some having been lightly edited for clarity.

UW Involvement With WI And NBCTS

Planning the UW Candidate Support Program⁹

The dean of the UW College of Education was a member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards from 1999-2000. As such, she brought a degree of personal knowledge and commitment to the partnership that would become the Washington Initiative. Further, the dean was involved in preparing the grant for the Washington Initiative and was thus one of the original architects of the statewide infrastructure designed to involve institutions of higher education as central players in the support of NBPTS candidates. The rationale, in her words:

I was very supportive of creating National Board opportunities for teachers in the State of Washington. Further I was interested in making sure that professors in Colleges of Education know the standards and understand what it is that professional teachers are shooting for... it is possible in a busy world for institutions that are engaged in teacher preparation not to know as much as they would like to about things like the National Board certification process because it is designed for more experienced teachers. My own work in teacher education suggested to me that one of the reasons we lose so many young people is that we don't have a very coherent approach to recruiting and preparing and then *sustaining* teachers, and so by creating a National Board process here at the university, I can engage faculty who are designers of our teacher education program, and that creates better coherence between our preparation program and National Board certification.

The UW faculty member and graduate assistant who were originally appointed to design the UW program were also familiar with the NBPTS program and standards. To inform the design of the program, they immersed themselves further in the NBPTS by attending conferences, facilitator trainings and candidate support groups. They also educated themselves about the programs of support for NB candidates that had been offered by the WEA for several years; here they found syllabi and activities-in-use they could adapt in order to build a support program consistent with the UW institution. When a new Coordinator took over after the program was planned but before activities had begun, there was no loss of continuity and momentum because the new Coordinator brought a high level of knowledge and commitment to the program. Within the College of Education, faculty were involved early in the planning stages; this planning recently led the Curriculum & Instruction and Special Education areas to approve graduate-level credit leading to a master's degree, for teachers' participation in the National Board Certification process.

Facilitating Support Groups for NB Candidates

As a point of principle, a decision was made in the College to involve only tenure-track faculty (both junior and senior) in the Washington Initiative because they have authority over programs. Additionally, a faculty member from UW-Bothell was invited to participate as a way

⁹ Information for this section came from interviews and also from Joelle K. Jay: "The Washington Initiative Programs for Supporting National Board Certification: A History of Program Development." 2002. Internal report for the Washington Initiative.

to tap into faculty experience at the smaller campus and help build a stronger bridge between it and the main campus. Four UW faculty (including one from UW-Bothell), along with three NBCTs, were hired the first year (2001-02) to facilitate support groups for 50 candidates. To prepare for this role, the facilitators attended NBPTS facilitators' workshops as well as meetings and planning sessions at UW. The 50 candidates met either bi-weekly or monthly in four regional locations, with each group co-facilitated by a UW faculty member and a NBCT. In 2002-03 and again in 2003-04, UW provided support groups for 75 candidates, again divided into small groups. During the three core years of the program, then, UW offered support for a total of 200 NB candidates.¹⁰ In 2003-04, two ladder faculty members – one from the central campus and one from Bothel – facilitated groups, and the program was coordinated by a UW graduate student who is an NBCT.

II. FACULTY FACILITATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE NBPTS AND ON THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE WASHINGTON INITIATIVE

The UW faculty members who agreed to facilitate support groups did so for a number of reasons. For the most part they benefited substantially from their participation, though there were also minor costs. And while these faculty members are, as one person said, "fans" of the NBPTS and of the recognition that it offers teachers, they harbor some minor concerns.

Benefits to faculty serving as facilitators

Consistency of NB professional development standards and practices with faculty's own values and teaching practices. Individual faculty members varied in their level of prior experience in facilitating teachers' reflection on their practice and their students' learning. The participating faculty were consistent, though, in believing in the value of this approach, i.e., of teachers' documenting and strengthening their teaching through study of student work. One faculty member identified multiple reasons for her agreeing to participate in the program and to becoming a more visible advocate for NB certification:

I was favorably disposed for several reasons... In the first place I liked having that link between my work here [at the University] and practicing classroom teachers. The second is that I have very strong feelings about mandated and prescribed curriculum, and I see that as a real invasion of the notion of teachers as decision makers about their children. At this point, I think that the National Board process, from all I have seen so far, is our best hope in terms of helping teachers be acknowledged and recognized as professionals, as people who should make decisions about curriculum and about their children. Thirdly, I see National Board helping teachers become more articulate about their practice so they become better advocates for their children and better spokespeople in the political arena. And fourthly, I really like the National Board standards that come with the certificate. I appreciate that the work always comes back to 'what did the kids learn.'

By facilitating support groups, UW faculty were bolstering their own skills and knowledge in an area they valued. For example, some faculty see their involvement with the WI as helping

¹⁰ Natural attrition brought this number to 194.

them develop the new Professional Certificate programs in their areas. Participating in the program also helped them become stronger advocates for teacher professionalism.

Costs of faculty involvement

Time pressure on junior faculty. For all faculty who served as a facilitator, the role was added onto their teaching load and research responsibilities. For those faculty without tenure, the ability to devote extra time to this form of public service – even when financially compensated – can draw attention away from the research needed to publish and gain tenure.

Financial compensation. For faculty at any level but especially for junior faculty, the financial compensation has been an important salary enhancement. There is some concern that there will be too little funding in the post-grant phase to make participation viable for junior faculty. One faculty member said, “One of the purposes behind the money was to get the universities involved in the National Board process and it certainly has had that effect. But the funding for next year is very up in the air. I’m not sure how I am going to be paid, and so I am trying to figure out how I can still be involved.”

Concerns about the NBPTS itself

The faculty at UW who have been involved in the WI believe strongly in the overall benefit and value of the NBPTS, and they are committed to helping more teachers gain certification and to strengthening their own Education courses and programs. They do, however, harbor some minor concerns about the NBPTS,¹¹ and are worried that if the National Board does not address such concerns, the credibility of the NBPTS and value of the certificate could be eroded.

Possible limitations of the standardized approach of the NBPTS. There is widespread agreement that compiling a NB portfolio and becoming certified offer teachers valuable professional growth and opportunity. Amid this enthusiasm one person voiced the concern that the necessary “standardization” of the portfolio could unintentionally circumscribe some teachers’ ability to portray the true excellence of their teaching:

I understand that the certification process is nothing without the portfolios and the assessment center being reliable measures. But the other side of those reliable measures is that there has to be some standardization. So for some teachers, the very linear organization of the portfolio and the way that the portfolio has to be approached causes them to distort their practice and distort their thinking to fit that particular mold—and yet they have to do that. So I understand that they have to have reliable results, and I also think that this is the best model that I know so far of really doing a performance assessment of teachers, but the standardization and the sometimes nick-pickiness of the portfolio gets in some people’s ways of showing the quality teaching that they can do.

Equitable opportunity for teachers. One faculty member noted that the prospect for certification “favors people with resources.” Teachers in districts that offer financial support, released time, technical support, and coaching are more likely to become certified than equally

¹¹ Their concerns are about the NBPTS, not the Washington Initiative’s support of it.

effective teachers without these resources. This can exacerbate existing inequities in teachers' opportunity for growth and ultimately the distribution of quality teachers in the schools. A faculty member also pointed out that the research showing differential certification rates for teachers of color is troubling and is something the NBPTS will "have to take care of."

III. CONTRIBUTIONS OF NBPTS AND WI PARTICIPATION TO THE UW COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

As in other Schools of Education in Washington, Education faculty at UW and UW-Bothell are grappling with how to create series of teacher preparation and development programs that take into account resident certification, the new professional certification (Pro Cert), the NB certificate, and the master's degree in ways that are conceptually and economically viable for their institutions, and also satisfactory to their "market" of teachers. For the deans, directors, and some faculty on both campuses, involvement in the WI signaled an opportunity to engage faculty in work that could ultimately lead to greater infusion of NB standards and practices into all programs and thus could strengthen both the substance and overall coherence of Education offerings.

Contributions to courses and programs

In the words of a UW-Bothell faculty member, changes that are underway in courses and programs on that campus reflect the convergence of these several forces:

In my mind, [developing new courses] was a response to the National Board piece, that students coming in who wanted to do a National Board portfolio would have different needs... And it ties in too with our market. Many, many of our M.Ed. students now are teachers, and a huge percentage of them are combining the Professional Certificate with the M.Ed. and so it is not just National Board that is pushing that change.

Course Development

At UW-Bothell, development of new coursework demonstrates the overlap between the new certificates (Pro Cert and NB) and a new vision of the M.Ed. One new course—designed to take into account NB standards and practices—emphasizes teachers' analysis of students and their work as a way to support more intentional teaching. Because the Pro Cert standards are well aligned with NB standards, this course also serves teachers in gaining their Pro Cert. And since the teachers will be combining their Pro Cert with a master's, new course development also enriches the course offerings for the M.Ed. The faculty also plans to add new courses focused on teaching in specific content areas because of the NB content assessment; these courses, too, will enrich teachers' M.Ed. programs.

Within existing courses, some faculty are giving greater emphasis to the alignment of assessment, instruction, and student outcomes in the way they are linked in the NB standards. One person uses visual displays from the NBPTS in her teaching. As she put it, "those have always been important ideas to me, but I think that I am foregrounding them even more, because of my work with National Board." Although only one UW-Bothell faculty member has

facilitated candidate groups, there are others whose thinking is consistent with NB standards and practices and who infuse them into their courses.

Teacher Certification

At UW-Bothell, the faculty see consistency among the NCATE standards for teacher preparation, the state's standards for the Professional Certificate, and National Board standards. In the conceptual framework for their programs, they envision a continuum of professional growth that begins with the teaching certificate and continues through Board certification. They recently revised the standards for the teaching certificate to, in the words of one faculty member, "more adequately take into account the National Board standards... [candidates] have to provide evidence that they are meeting certain program standards, and those program standards have a direct link to the National Board standards, the core propositions."

Professional Certification (Pro Cert)

The UW is currently offering the first course of the new Pro Cert program. The Pro Cert coordinator does not see Pro Cert standards or criteria as identical to those of the NB (the NB are more rigorous), and does not see teachers as likely to want to embark on NB certification in their 2nd or 3rd year. However, she sees Pro Cert work helping directly to prepare teachers for future NB certification.¹² She envisions that UW is "gleaning what we can from what we are learning from our support of National Board candidates, and thinking about how to infuse that into our Pro Cert program." As one example, the Pro Cert program includes the three types of writing about practice that are required in the National Board portfolio. Additionally, the plan for the UW Pro Cert program includes the availability of individual coaching as teachers prepare their Pro Cert materials. The program coordinator is seeking out NBCTs to play this role so they can bring their experience with the kinds of reflective practices that NB promotes to the Pro Cert programs. The same is true at UW-Bothell, where a NBCT is facilitator of a Pro Cert program operated in partnership with a district.

Within Special Education, there is some concern among the UW faculty that the state's Pro Cert requirements are problematic. Special Education faculty – two of whom have served as NB candidate facilitators – see the NB candidate process as being especially fruitful as a starting point for building a model Pro Cert Program in Special Education.

Master's in Education (M.Ed.)

Early on in UW Seattle's participation in the WI, there were links made to the master's degree (M.Ed.) in Curriculum and Instruction. Participation in the candidate support group carries six graduate-level credits toward the 45-credit degree. Completion of the NB portfolio currently satisfies six of the nine credits required for the final project if students choose that as their option; MA candidates may also elect to use their NB portfolio as their thesis option. In 2004, the Special Education program agreed to a similar link between its master's degree and NBPTS candidacy.

¹² There are some faculty who believe that many teachers will focus on the NB certification in their 4th or 5th year in lieu of the Pro Cert because gaining the NB certificate automatically grants the Pro Cert.

It is likely that personal participation in the candidate support process has brought about the degree of faculty interest necessary to a serious re-consideration of the master's degree. One faculty member put it this way:

I think that [these support groups] have been a real positive thing, whether or not it was a model that could be sustained over a lifetime of support. I think what was very good was to have faculty members in those support groups as co-facilitators, because they really came to understand firsthand [the candidates'] work and really came to appreciate it. That is my general impression. I am not saying that 100% of the facilitators are 100% totally supportive of the National Board. They are faculty, and no one is ever going to say that all faculty are going to just roll over and say oh; but I think it is generally true of the faculty members who have participated that they really see this as really good work for teachers to be doing. I think it was the firsthand experience that they had of that, rather than if they had been sitting on the sidelines and someone had come in and talked to them about National Board. Now you have people in [different] areas [of the College] who can speak about National Board.

At the UW-Bothell campus, the Education faculty are also re-thinking the master's degree requirements. The M.Ed. has traditionally attracted a wide range of students, including those who are not classroom teachers. The master's has thus included foundational education courses and has required a research project as a thesis. More recently, the great majority of M.Ed. students are practicing teachers who see the degree as offering a salary increase. They (and thus the faculty) have begun to wonder about the value of the existing M.Ed. project for these students. As the faculty began exploring different thesis options, they began hearing (and seeing for themselves) that the NB portfolios might be a good alternative M.Ed. thesis:

We started discussing various options [for the M.Ed. thesis] and the first one to come up was the National Board portfolio because in our work with the teachers [candidates], many of them argued that they learned more from doing the National Board portfolio, that it was more rigorous than their M.Ed. programs had been. I started thinking about how this would make a very good culminating project. [Other faculty] thought the same way and so we began to talk about it along with other possibilities for culminating projects.

The faculty at UW-Bothell ultimately decided to approve the use of the NB portfolio as an option, but only after talking through the multiple ramifications of the change. There were implications for required coursework (e.g., a research methods course that serves the research thesis option). There was a more philosophical implication too, for example, the question of whether the NB portfolio, on its own, is too "practical" and not academic enough to qualify as a university-sanctioned master's project. And there was some concern that the NB portfolio is too externally controlled to serve the university's mission. Finally, however, because there was general agreement that the M.Ed. did need re-thinking, and because those familiar with NB could make a good case for the portfolio's rigor and the value to teachers, the faculty approved the option with little controversy. The first group of eight students choosing this option will use their NB portfolios as M.Ed. projects in Spring 2005. (For students opting for the M.Ed. with the traditional thesis, their portfolio counts for six credits toward the degree.)

Roles for NBCTs in Education Programs

NBCTs serve as co-facilitators of the UW candidate support groups on both campuses. Their role is critically important because they have the personal experience of having prepared NB portfolios in the past. In their interactions with UW faculty, they can offer many insights into issues related to the NB standards, professional development practices, and portfolio processes. Several adjunct faculty in Teacher Education programs are practicing teachers, and among them are NBCTs. The College is discussing the extent to which they wish deliberately to seek out NBCTs for this role. At UW-Bothell, a NBCT facilitates the Pro Cert program. Also, NBCTs play several roles in the teacher certification program: they are master teachers, guest lecturers in courses, and members of the advisory board for the program. Eight NBCTs are participating in a faculty member's research project.

NBCTs are likely to play an even greater and more intentional role in the future. The UW College of Education holds out a vision of a more seamless and more rich professional continuum for teachers:

One of the things that our faculty has been working on for some time is creating a continuum of support for teachers from their pre-service years through the fifth year of teaching. We believe that by thinking about preparation and then the early career and then the later career, and making sure that we are aiming towards an intellectually rigorous career that takes responsibility for student achievement, we feel as if we are moving in closer alignment with the actual needs of real teachers.

National Board certification of teachers has an important place in this continuum. First, it is a major milestone of professional development. Second, NBCTs are seen as especially well positioned to mentor their colleagues and play other leadership roles in strengthening the profession. Though not all pieces of this envisioned continuum are in place yet and faculty commitment cannot be said to be unanimous, a good number of faculty at UW support the vision and who see current developments such as those discussed in this portrait as helping to advance it.

Toward a stronger profession

At UW, the NB work is seen by some as helping contribute to a broader – as yet unrealized – vision of a teaching profession where there is a stronger role for teachers who have established themselves as effective in the classroom:

I believe we ought to have a differentiated teaching career and that over time, teachers ought to be challenged repeatedly to take on new roles and responsibilities. I believe that one of the things that we are looking to create, which doesn't exist in the State of Washington now, is a number of roles that experienced teachers can fulfill as a means by which to maintain their fresh perspective on teaching and at the same time grow and develop as teachers. National Board certification is one of the steps that I think a teacher can take in order to become a stronger master teacher who is then prepared to teach others, and/or lead policy initiatives. ... one of the things that we keep hoping for is that the National Board Certified Teachers will have a very strong voice in both creating and maintaining the regulations around teachers' careers and second of all, they will take

responsibility for conversing about and shaping policy. Then I also hope that they will fulfill a number of roles in school districts and in colleges and universities. NBCTs should be co-teaching courses at the university and we have several on our staff now. They should also be creating courses for teachers who are cooperating teachers with brand new emerging teachers. They should hold responsibility for shaping mentoring programs. I feel sort of like National Board certification is a process whereby a teacher establishes that he or she has now gained the expertise and has demonstrated the commitment to his or her profession in order to assume additional responsibilities.

Establishing the National Board center and working to sustain it over time is seen as part of the University's responsibility to continue working in behalf of this vision.

Moving beyond the grant toward sustainability through district partnerships

As grant funding from the Washington Initiative comes to an end in 2004-05, UW has begun experimenting with a new, less costly model of candidate support where UW faculty will still be able to add value to candidates' portfolio process. In this model, districts are seen as stronger partners, using professional development funds to provide support groups for their own candidates. UW faculty in smaller numbers would convene the district facilitators as a group to provide support for them; thus, the UW faculty would serve as "critical friends" to district facilitators rather than direct facilitators of candidate groups. In 2003-04, the last year of full funding, UW is operating a mixed model. UW facilitators are providing direct support for WI-funded candidates who are not in district-supported programs, and are also trying out the new "critical friends to facilitators" model for groups of candidates in those partner districts (such as Seattle, Bellevue, Northshore) that have established support groups for candidates. Other models may arise also; for example, UW faculty offering support related to candidates in certificate-alike groups. To carry out this work and move these plans forward, UW has created a "NB facilitator support team" that includes UW faculty (including the Bothell campus), NBCTs who are experienced facilitators, and representatives of district partners (including some NBCTs). For the long term, UW hopes to sustain candidate support both by partnering with districts and by developing some level of endowed scholarships.

IV. REFLECTIONS ON THE UW EXPERIENCE

UW has been a central player in the Washington Initiative since its inception. Throughout the duration of the project there has been slow and steady work on both campuses directed toward realizing a coherent vision of teacher preparation, professional development, and ongoing professional growth and status. This work seems to be both enhanced and complicated by four factors:

- the range of certification and degree options (e.g., Pro Cert, NB certification, master's degrees)
- the multiple institutions whose policies and criteria govern them (state, NBPTS, and universities)
- the point in history where new certifications (Pro Cert, NB certificate) interact and sometime collide with historical degree programs (master's)

- the presence of a well defined but partially realized vision of UW Education programs as offering a continuum of development and leadership for teachers throughout their careers

Below, we put the spotlight on the forces that seem to be most strongly at work at UW.

NBPTS standards and practices as a key contributor to Education program development

Before the Washington Initiative was created, the UW dean and UW-Bothell director were knowledgeable about NBPTS standards and professional documentation practices. Importantly, they were also advocates of the standards and practices because they are consistent with their own vision of professional excellence. Thus, the NBPTS and all it represents occupies an important place in the UW vision of a professional continuum. The NBPTS is a visible and credible repository of professional standards of excellence in teaching; its certificate signifies an important professional achievement for teachers; and those teachers who are Board-certified represent an important source of support and leadership within the profession, including within UW programs of preparation and support.

WI as an important contributor to faculty knowledge and commitment

The Washington Initiative was important to UW as a “carrier” of NBPTS standards and practices into the UW College and Program of Education. Through the WI, individual faculty members gained firsthand familiarity with the standards and firsthand experience working with teachers who were documenting their practice in relation to those standards. This experience not only enabled the faculty members to develop their own beliefs in the standards themselves, but also to develop their own judgments about the rigor of the process and about the skills and knowledge of the teachers seeking certification. Just as the designers of the WI hypothesized, enabling faculty to see for themselves played an important role in gaining their commitment to the NBPTS as a model for their own program development and to NBCTs as colleagues working on the strengthening of their profession.

Institutional factors affecting the pace of change

Our interviewees did not emphasize the pace of change as slow or characterize the discussions as particularly rancorous. Nonetheless, the reality is that universities (like all large, historically robust organizations) have institutional structures that prevent major changes from happening quickly; also, they are concerned with risks associated with economics and market. It is no small matter to change a master’s degree, create a new state-mandated certificate program, change hiring or compensation systems, re-define faculty reward systems, and so on.¹³ Changes described in this account call all of these structures into question and inevitably slow the pace of change. It is far too soon to tell what programmatic changes will actually thrive and how close the College of Education will come to realizing its vision of teacher preparation and professional growth. The NBPTS (and its carrier, the WI) is certainly exerting an impact, but there are always multiple forces at work that affect actual change.

¹³ Joelle Jay’s history of IHE involvement notes that many barriers cropped up in the initial year as a result of the WI partnership structure trying to interact with IHE institutional structures.

Sustainability of faculty commitment

Individual faculty work with NB candidates (and with NBCTs in other ways) plays an important role, as noted above, in increasing faculty commitment to program development. To sustain individual faculty participation, the benefits and rewards of participation must outweigh the potential costs. To accrue long-term mutual benefits to faculty and programs, it seems important to sustain the involvement of both junior and senior faculty. It is not clear at this point how well UW's strategy for sustaining the program beyond the grant will create the conditions that sustain faculty involvement. Those involved, though, are optimistic that UW will find ways to sustain participation in the National Board program. As one person noted:

We feel as if participation in this initiative has had an effect on our curriculum and on our faculty and their knowledge about the continuum and what is happening in the field of teacher development, and that has had a positive effect for us here...We are going to figure it out. We are intent on making sure that the National Board center stays alive here.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

I. BACKGROUND

Washington State College of Education

The Washington State University College of Education consists of two departments: Teaching and Learning, and Leadership & Counseling Psychology. Each of these departments offers courses and programs in all four branch campuses: Pullman (main campus), Tri-Cities, Vancouver, and Spokane. The Teaching and Learning Department at WSU offers several education degrees and programs, including a BA, EdM, MA, MIT (Master in Teaching), EdD, and PhD. In addition, K-12 teaching endorsements (e.g., bilingual education, ESL, Foreign Languages, Reading, and Special Education) and subject-based secondary teaching certificates and endorsement programs (e.g., biology, English, history, and social studies) are offered. There are approximately 350 graduate students, 825 undergraduate certificate students, and 350 undergraduates who have not yet been officially accepted into the College of Education.

Pullman is located in a very rural region of the state. There are only five schools in the local district (one high school, one middle school, and three elementary schools), and the teacher certification program at WSU serves up to 250 pre-service teachers needing field placement. Moreover, the Pullman education programs have a commitment to addressing issues of ethnic diversity, yet the Pullman region is almost entirely white. This, according to one professor, is the “biggest contextual factor impacting the work of the college of education.”¹⁴ To address this situation, WSU has created partnerships with schools in Seattle, Spokane, and Tacoma, WA.

WSU has experienced an unusually high rate of faculty turnover within the College of Education in the last few years. Currently at the Pullman campus, out of 25 professors in the T & L department, there are only three full professors and just a handful with tenure. Most of the professors in the department are new to the academy.

WSU and the Washington Initiative¹⁵

The dean of the College of Education in Pullman hired a program coordinator for the WI project soon after receiving funding. This new coordinator was faced with an enormous challenge: designing and coordinating a NBCT support program to serve 36 of the 39 counties in the state, drawing on the good will and expertise of faculty spread out among four branch campuses, and identifying and involving NBCTs spread out across the state.

¹⁴ Faculty interview. Data for this study included faculty interviews, WSU program documents, and a written account of the history of IHE participation. All quotations are from faculty or staff interviews; some having been lightly edited for clarity.

¹⁵ Information for this section is drawn from Joelle K. Jay: “The Washington Initiative Programs for Supporting National Board Certification: A History of Program Development.” 2002. Internal report for the Washington Initiative.

The coordinator had no previous knowledge of the National Board, so her first task was to familiarize herself with the NBPTS, its history, materials, and various models of support programs. In particular, she worked closely with faculty members at a university in another state that had a successful program. Simultaneously, she found faculty at each of the campuses as well as NBCTs across the state to commit to participating as facilitators. At that time, there were only 69 NBCTs total in the state of Washington.

To get the word out to all four campuses, she created and mailed a binder of background information on the NBPTS directly to each faculty member in the Teaching and Learning Departments. Initially, and to this day, she relies on faculty to step forward out of their own interest to fill the paid facilitator positions. As she put it:

I realized early on that I had a responsibility as part of the Washington Initiative to incorporate [National Board] into our program here and I wasn't going to sit and wait for them to come to me. So I made appointments with all of [the professors] and met with them.

Also, as part of her work, the coordinator created a syllabus that each candidate support group would be expected to follow, though it was also expected that each group will have its own needs and interests.

In some cases, the distance between groups of teachers who are in need of support is quite large, resulting in facilitators working with more than one group. For example, one professor at the Vancouver campus facilitated a group in Vancouver and a group in Yakima, nearly 200 miles away. The distances proved to be a barrier for some professors in their efforts to provide ongoing regular contact with teachers.

Teachers participating in a group can receive graduate or professional development credit upon completion of the course. "Partnership districts" (of which there are currently 28 in the WSU service area) pay \$500 to WSU on behalf of each teacher in the support programs.

II. FACULTY FACILITATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE NBPTS AND ON THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE WASHINGTON INITIATIVE

Views about the National Board Standards

In general, faculty who are involved with the WI at WSU believe that the NBPTS is a good thing for teachers. They believe that the process of systematically documenting one's practice, collecting data and evidence, and reflecting on it are extremely valuable processes for teachers, and one that does indeed identify and demonstrate excellence. One professor explains:

I got to know the teachers in the cohorts that I started to work with and see the impact that it was having on them, regardless of what was going to happen with their entries ultimately. It was really about training the mind to document very closely what they hopefully already do as accomplished teachers: collecting data, presenting data, making a case, and really systematically looking at your practice and learning. And, learning

how to communicate that with an audience. Just that in itself goes along with my beliefs, plus high attention to student voice and student work, and flexibility for the local context of one's teaching. Also encouragement to reflect and say not only what you do that is very good, but what you would do differently, and take a real honest look at your teaching. In that sense, I think it is a very strong system.

Another professor expressed a similar view of the value of the process for teachers:

I think it is an exceptionally valid process. I am not one who is terribly in favor of these kinds of certificates—I think they are fairly meaningless, but as I see, and as I participated in this process, I saw that it was intense. I saw that it really validated a lot of what I like to talk about with undergraduates in terms of reflecting on your own practice and reflecting in a very critical and deep manner, and also the graduate work in which you then turn that into some kind of public knowledge about your own teaching. I am just really happy with what I saw the process doing for these teachers. It is not just the certification; I think they learn an awful lot as they go through it. It is not just 'pass this test,' it is a process of professional development as well and I think that is a really good thing to be going through. I was convinced that it was a very, very good learning process for these teachers and I am also convinced that through this process, you do get good, those who get certified are good. I don't think you can hide from this process at all.

Therefore, for some faculty who may have been uncertain or even skeptical at first, seeing the teachers' work firsthand convinced them both of the rigor and value of the process and also the quality of the teachers.

However, there are issues about the process and the standards themselves that continue to trouble some; for example, that the process is too much a "writing task." One professor who has facilitated support groups commented on this aspect:

If you are not a good writer, you are trapped. You could be a great teacher, but if you are not a good writer, it is almost impossible to get certified. If you are a very good writer, some people say, you can cover up the fact that you may not be that good of a teacher. And that is probably the biggest concern, is that it can become more of an exercise in persuasive writing.

Another concern is assessor bias. Who is standardizing the assessors? One professor questions:

They talked about bias training and how the assessors can remove their bias when they look at the work of the teachers, and I found that unlikely that anyone's bias could ever be removed. I wondered about the assessment system in that sense and I have always had a concern about what gets counted as evidence and what gets counted as data. When I went through the trainings, we practiced on some entries and I was way off what the assessors assessed them at. How objective can anything like this be?

Ultimately, though, those we spoke with who participated as support group co-facilitators overcame their initial skepticism to embrace the process as a valuable professional development experience for teachers. In the case of one professor, his understanding of the process and commitment to it impelled him to respond to a negative commentary on the NBPTS published

in an online education journal. His response defended the process, and he concluded that while not perfect, “the benefits [of NBPTS] far outweigh the drawbacks.”

Awareness of the WI and NBPTS on WSU campuses

While WSU has successfully facilitated support groups for NB candidates since the beginning of the WI, the extent of faculty understanding of the Initiative and the National Board, or even the level of awareness, is limited beyond those few who have participated directly. One professor reported that when he began facilitating in the beginning, none of his colleagues seemed to know anything about the National Board, or show much interest. In fact, some believed that commitments were made to the WI without faculty consent. He describes it this way:

I said I would [facilitate support groups], and then I find out that the reason they did it was because I guess there was a commitment made outside of the departments to participate in the initiative, but I don't think there was any faculty buy-in. I don't think there was a commitment, and I don't think anybody really knew about it—except for the reports that I would bring back and talk with people in the hallways and those kinds of things.

When asked if he believed this lack of broad faculty involvement and buy-in was still the case, he replied:

The only thing that anybody else would really know would be what I told them. I would do little summaries at faculty meetings and I would talk with people in meetings and I would talk with people in the hallway, those kinds of things. That is about it. In terms awareness, I think I have raised the awareness throughout the college, and I have talked with the dean and I talked with _____ who directs the partnership center, who does outreach across the state, but a lot of that is kind of informal. I think as I have talked to people, I have made an argument for National Board as an important thing and I saw the process as one that is valuable, but again, a lot of that was fairly informal. I think I did raise some of the awareness, but I don't think people really know what the process is all about, and what it entails and what it is for.

Given the distributed nature of the branch campuses, and the large number of faculty in the College, it is not surprising that the level of awareness and engagement has remained rather limited. The traveling distance alone emerged as a barrier to regular contact for some. Broadening faculty knowledge and commitment under these conditions would require an explicit strategy focused on that goal.

Contributions of the WI/NBPTS to WSU College of Education programs

For professors new to Washington State, involvement in the NB candidate support programs has enabled them to familiarize themselves with districts, schools, and teachers around the state, and connect them directly to the classrooms of the National Board certified teachers with whom they have co-facilitated. In addition, professors involved in the WI at WSU have considered potential new avenues of research as well as revamping the master's degree requirements.

Connections with classrooms and teachers

For new professors at WSU, participating as a support group facilitator provided access to schools and teachers across the state. As one professor explained,

[Being involved in the support groups] allowed me to get to know teachers in the area, their circumstances, and state issues. I have a couple of other jobs here that are indirectly related; I'm also working on the Pro Cert program, which is a version of the National Board, they used the standards to create Pro Cert standards.

Another professor, also new to WSU, described a similar experience:

In my position that I was coming into, I knew that I wouldn't have a lot of contact with teachers and schools. I saw [support group facilitation] as an opportunity to get a little exposure to what is going on in the state, get people to know me a little bit and I get to know some teachers and schools. So I checked it out and it seemed like it was a pretty decent deal, given that there was going to be a course release, that it wasn't just one more thing added on.

Therefore, for at least these two professors, the WI enabled them to become familiarized with districts around the state and connect with candidate teachers as well as National Board certified teachers. Further, for one, involvement with the WI enhanced his understanding of the professional certification process, which is in part modeled on the NB.

Faculty research

One of the facilitating professors has identified research topics related to NBPTS that he believes could both strengthen the case for National Board Standards as well as address some of its shortcomings. For example, one area of interest for him is the lack of ethnic diversity among NBCTs, both in the state as well as across the nation. What are the factors that contribute to this phenomenon? This professor is also interested in studies that explore the impact of NBCTs on student achievement. He believes such research is the necessary next step for making the case for National Board Standards.

Master's degrees at WSU

Currently, there are two types of master's degrees offered through WSU: a Master's in Arts, and a Master's in Education (Ed.M). The Ed.M option allows the student to take an exam in lieu of writing a thesis as the culminating project. Currently, conversations are underway at the Pullman campus that would eliminate this option and allow the NBPTS portfolio to stand in for a thesis. Because of his firsthand experience facilitating candidate support courses, one professor believes the work that goes into preparing an NBPTS application is in fact more rigorous and meaningful for teachers than the current WSU option. However, at this point it is not clear what will eventually happen with this decision. He explains:

The hope is that we could keep the initiative going, trying to wrap up National Board certification into some sort of master's degree, and that would be one way we could sustain [the work]. At this point, we are in the process of changing a lot of our master's

degree requirements. I have made the argument that we should be able to accept the application as a master's thesis, because I think it really is a very intense kind of research that is actually much better than a lot of what we get for theses. I think people would accept such a thing, but I don't think we have had anybody come through with that in mind, and we certainly haven't advertised it.

Conclusion

At WSU, there has been a substantial impact on those individuals who have directly participated in the WI. They accepted the invitation to participate for a range of reasons (such as, it would give them access to teachers) and the experience was more valuable and affected them more than they anticipated (i.e., they came to value the process and the teachers).

For a number of reasons (e.g., spread-out faculty, absence of initial participation by faculty in the decision) the impact has not yet begun to spread in significant ways, beyond informal conversations and preliminary discussions of potential changes to the master's program. To see more infusion of NB standards and processes in the practices and programs of WSU, there would need to be additional strategic and strong leadership work from within the College to make that happen. As one professor put it: "I think if [the WI] wanted an emphasis on higher ed and changes in higher ed, then there should have been a clearer direction there."

For the faculty who were involved, the benefit of the WI may have less to do with its potential influence on their College and more to do with the opportunity that it gave directly to teachers. As one person commented, the candidate support offered through WI funds enabled teachers to apply for National Board certification who might otherwise not even have considered it:

I think that you had people who started doing it that normally wouldn't have and I think that is a pretty decent thing. I think that if the Washington Initiative wasn't around, a lot of people wouldn't do it. I imagine that when there is no support, a lot of people going through will dry up. I don't know what the statistics are as to how effective the Washington Initiative was in helping the teachers to become certified, but I would imagine it was pretty good. I really appreciated the groups that we had and I thought it was valuable.

PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

In faculty meetings, if we are not talking about it directly, the National Board process is starting to insinuate itself into everything; it is the standard by which we are starting to develop and judge any program we do.

– PLU School of Education staff

I. BACKGROUND

Pacific Lutheran University School of Education

Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) is a small, private institution of higher learning located in Tacoma, Washington, approximately 40 miles south of Seattle. The PLU School of Education grants undergraduate and master's degrees in education, as well as an alternative certification program, a special education certification program, certification endorsement programs, and continuing education. On average, PLU certifies 150 undergraduates each year (there are approximately 400 total in various stages of the program). In addition, there are approximately 50 students in an MA plus certification program, and 50 in the alternative certification route. There are about 25 students in a masters for teachers program. The certification programs are both elementary and secondary.

As a small university, there are only 15 full-time faculty, including the dean and associate dean, plus a small number of part-time faculty. PLU is primarily a teaching institution; therefore the type of research the faculty undertakes is described as "scholarship of application," meaning research that is immediately applicable to teaching or program issues at the university. For example, faculty in special education have been examining the conditions that encourage professors in special education to stay in the field. Their goal is to inform colleges of education and districts about these conditions such that more people might be drawn to and settle on a career in the field.

Relationships with local districts

PLU has close relationships with 16 local school districts, most significantly around preparing new teachers for and granting the Professional Certificate (more about the Professional Certificate below). In addition, PLU collaborates with districts on professional development for math teachers, middle school teacher quality, and the development of mentors. The dean believes the School's reputation within the districts is quite favorable, based primarily (though not exclusively) on the perceived quality of their teacher certification graduates.

They are considered to be some of the best, if not the best out there. I think it is largely due to an enormous faculty commitment to really seeing it through and real ownership of it. Our graduates are viewed as really well prepared.

Further, the faculty at PLU feel they have a real and appreciated presence within the schools, as well as personal relationships with the district administrations. The PLU faculty are committed

to working with the schools whether or not there is a special grant or program in place to do so. The dean explains:

The faculty in this department are in schools. We go out with our students, we know teachers, we know principals, we know superintendents, and they know us. It is very connected and we are very responsive. We don't have to be paid for a lot of this, and we don't ask. We don't establish these partnerships only if there is a grant or something.

PLU and the WI/NBPTS: "Kindred spirits"

The connection between PLU and the National Board began prior to PLU becoming a grantee of the Washington Initiative. A staff member in PLU's information office contacted the dean of the School of Education about meeting her daughter, one of the first teachers to be National Board certified in the state (in mathematics). She taught in a neighboring district with which PLU had a history of collaboration. The dean described meeting this teacher as having met her "kindred spirit," sharing with her an energy for and belief in the National Board process. After that initial meeting, the dean arranged an informal lunch with a few local Board certified teachers and key faculty who she thought would be interested in the process. Almost immediately, faculty resonated with the concept and process of the NBPTS. Cashing in on their enthusiasm, the dean began sending faculty (along with the NBCTs) to National Board training sessions. As the dean put it,

We wanted to learn about it. It was really important for me to send teams, and this is where we are not just a research university. I think it is an important investment of institutional funds and faculty development. I don't just pay faculty to present at conferences; they go to learn. Ultimately we sent —out of our 15-person faculty, and before we ever got on board with the Washington Initiative—11 faculty to go through either facilitator training or some other significant, multi-day training with the National Board. And they were always with National Board teachers.

It was at one of these trainings that PLU connected with Jeanne Harmon, director of the WI. As in her initial meeting with the NBCT, she described Jeanne as a "kindred spirit." While it was never assumed that PLU would be funded by the WI to continue the momentum, the department was nonetheless committed to pursuing National Board connections because they believed the approach to teaching and learning espoused by the National Board and the process of professional growth it exemplified is a "natural fit and intuitive match" to their own. Once the funding did come through, PLU was already well-positioned to engage in facilitator training, as by that time all PLU faculty had participated in some kind of NBPTS event, whether or not they planned on doing support group facilitation.

II. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WI/NBPTS TO PLU FACULTY AND PROGRAMS

Candidate support groups in 16 partner districts

PLU facilitated seven candidate support groups during the WI. Each group was facilitated by a faculty member and a partnering NBCT. The NBCTs involved in the support groups are part of a network of NBCTs that has been created as a result of partnerships with 16 regional districts. PLU's Director of the Center for Partnerships and Professional Development has helped these teachers form a network so they can support and learn from one another in the course of facilitating a candidate group. Currently there are just over 20 teachers in this network. If a district does not contract directly with PLU for support group facilitation, the district will send its candidates to one of PLU's large group events, or a two-day orientation held each June. The large group events, called "Super Saturdays," provide opportunities for candidates from all over the region to meet and "be facilitated" for one day by a NBCT in their area.

Candidate support has also benefited the faculty at PLU. Professors involved in co-facilitating a candidate support group learn from their co-facilitator as well as from the contributions the candidates make in the seminars. These faculty have brought ideas from these teachers to the courses they teach, as well as to other teachers they work with.

Documented Entries: Changing the nature of the undergraduate assessment system

At one of the initial meetings between PLU faculty and local NBCTs, one faculty member in particular began thinking about how to apply the process and philosophy of the National Board to their undergraduate education program. Specifically, she and a few of her colleagues designed "documented entries:" pieces of reflective writing in which students reflect on and connect course content and field observations or experiences.

Essentially what we did was flip flop the conceptualization of an assignment. No longer was it "here, do this assignment and for the content you get a grade." It turned into, "well yes you still do that, but now you have to do the reflection piece and tell us what you did and what it means for you as a competent teacher and for your students as learners."

Currently, the documented entries span all four semesters of the education program for undergraduates. The entry questions are based on four themes ("building powerful learning communities," "understanding and assessing learning," "planning or and teaching for powerful learning," and "professionalism and professional development"), and each of the four themes are addressed every semester, with each term the questions becoming more complex. Unlike the National Board, the PLU faculty were not looking for evidence of accomplished teaching, but for deep and reflective thinking from the developing teacher.

Faculty perspectives

After two semesters of piloting this system, the majority of faculty are beginning to see the value of having students do the "thinking" work. In addition, as the dean describes here, the development and implementation of documented entries has created an opportunity for PLU faculty to work together:

It forced us to collaborate, because the products were rich and complex. And it pushed the synthesis piece for students. [In the old system], as long as the students were expecting that separate faculty were grading their assignments, we weren't sure that they were always seeing the connections or the way things were designed.

The implementation of documented entries has been a radical shift—a transformation—for the School of Education at PLU. While the majority of faculty have bought into the system and see its value, there are still some who find the changes difficult, even threatening. As one faculty member describes it,

It's taking some faculty awhile [to change]. There was some resistance because it couldn't make sense; it was flipped. The only difference is now you can use the same old assignments that you had, and students have to reflect on it; they have to tell us, rather than us telling them. You really have to turn your thinking around about whose roles are what. As a professor, you are not the one making all of the assumptions and connections - the students end up having to do that.

But, what was it about the National Board process that resonated so well with the thinking of these faculty and the creation of documented entries? According to the faculty member who spearheaded the project, it can be traced to two things: reflection and accountability. She explains:

First, the role of reflection, and that teachers have to be so conscious of what they are doing: they think about it, and take action on it, which hasn't always been the case. I think for the last 20 years we have talked a lot about teacher reflection and its importance, but haven't figured out good ways to actually teach teachers how to do that. Second, I think increased accountability: our teachers have to think about 'what are the assessments that I am using and why do they impact student learning and why am I doing this?' I think sometimes it is too easy to use a basal series or some curriculum a school district or school puts into your hands, and you don't think about it very much, you just do it and you just go through it. I think the National Board process really says, you need to think about your teaching and tell us why it is good teaching, or not good teaching.

The documented entries approach to student assessment also benefits the department in its preparation for an upcoming (2005) NCATE review. For that review, the School is required to demonstrate a systematic approach to the assessment of their students, with clear goals, targets, and points at which decisions are made about continuing (or not) in the program.

The development and implementation of documented entries, through their numerous iterations, represents a palpable turning point for the PLU School of Education. While the benefits to the School and the students seem clear to the faculty, what has it done for them, personally? One faculty member reflects:

I think for me it has given validity to what I have always tried to do with my own teaching, taken it a little bit further and made it more sophisticated, given it a little bit more structure and organization. It is not just in the classes that I am teaching, but it is

consistent across our program and I think that has really been an impact. I think it has validated our work and brought us all together.

Role of NBCTs

As part of their ongoing commitment to include NBCTs in their planning work, the PLU faculty conducted an “alignment retreat” whereby the entire School of Education faculty and four to five available NBCTs worked for two days to further develop the documented entries, discuss ways to infuse them in all of the undergraduate courses, and explore how they might build developmentally on one another. According to the Director of the Center for Partnerships and Professional Development the presence of the NBCTs was vital in shaping the discussions around the organization of the entries, the depth of the questions, and the nature and kind of student work that might be expected.

Overall, the practice of using documented entries has transformed the thinking and practice of the PLU School of Education, and it was a direct result of their introduction to and engagement with the principles and practices of the National Board. The dean describes it as a way of thinking about practice from two perspectives: accomplished teaching and teachers as agents of their own learning. She explains:

We don't think every teacher will necessarily be or should be a National Board teacher. It is about, for us, a way of thinking about practice that did two things. First, it is about accomplished teaching and excellent practice, and how you develop teachers who can be accomplished teachers whether they are National Board or not. Second, one of the things about National Board, is that it is teachers owning their own practice and owning their own learning, teachers as agents rather than as recipients of knowledge from some other person. That is what has transformed us. We really don't view us as the experts, us being the university faculty, imparting [knowledge] to our students anymore.

Professional Certification: NBPTS as a model, NBCTs as leaders

Over the last several years, PLU has purposefully engaged NBCTs in a variety of activities and roles at the university. Adjunct teaching, candidate support group facilitation, professional development workshops, and teaching professional certificate courses are among the most significant roles and tasks.

The Professional Certificate work at PLU has drawn heavily from the School's understanding of the National Board process and its relationship with NBCTs in the region.¹⁶ PLU currently serves approximately 400 teachers working on their Pro Cert. Their strategy has been to hire and support NBCTs as instructors/facilitators of Pro Cert candidates. Because the process and products of the Pro Cert are similar in nature to the National Board, NBCTs as instructors seemed to them like a natural fit, as the Director of Partnerships and Professional Development describes:

¹⁶ See IRA's September 2003 *Evaluation of the Washington Initiative Year 2 Report: A Study of Leadership* for more information about the development of a partnership between PLU and a local school district in creating and implementing a professional certification program.

The essential underlying process is very similar. The National Board teachers grasped that, and so they can roll with understanding the difference between a “CLIP” and a “PIP”, and they really have a handle on what it is that these new teachers are being asked to do as far as reflecting on their practice and gathering evidence to demonstrate meeting different standards.

The Pro Cert program is in its second year at PLU, and faculty and staff are seeing a noticeable impact in the way teachers are talking about their practice, as this comment from the Center director illustrates:

By the end there is a reflective paper that we asked them to do: “What have you learned in this process and how has it impacted your teaching and what do you plan to do next?” Often, when they have to think about those three questions is when we get a lot of the positive comments like, “I looked back and realized that now I pay more attention to pre- and post- assessments,” or “Now I am really looking at all of my students and figuring out how to meet each of their needs and not teaching to the middle.” Those are the kinds of comments that come from candidates, and it really makes the program exciting and helps us know that we are going in the right direction, although we have done a lot of revisions, based in large part on input from the National Board teachers on program design.

PLU has worked closely not only with NBCTs in the development of this program, but also the district professional development staff. This district connection has contributed to the development of good will and mutual support, and, in some cases, these connections have influenced districts’ positions on supporting National Board candidates.

A burgeoning NBCT network

The faculty and staff at PLU firmly believe that the Pro Cert program would not be as successful as it is without the committed involvement of the NBCTs. One of the positive outcomes of engaging NBCTs, both for the teachers and PLU, is the formation of a network of NBCTs all engaged in some way with PLU programs – either candidate facilitation, Pro Cert courses, or other course teaching or professional development. This network has become a conduit through which teachers are able to maintain contact (mostly through email, though PLU does bring them together for meetings on occasion) with other NBCTs in the area, to get ideas and feedback about the work they are doing in their classrooms and with PLU, and to learn about new opportunities available to them at the university. PLU also benefits. It gets access to NBCTs’ classrooms for student teacher placement, reaps the benefits of having NBCTs teach or co-teach courses on campus, and, perhaps most valuable, access to the insights and perspectives of talented, working teachers. As the partnerships director put it:

Having the National Board teachers involved with Pro Cert has been great. It is a really neat network that has started to develop. We send out emails probably a couple of times a week to the NBCTs and we email questions back and forth. A lot of them email each other, so a NBCT in Port Angeles and I talked to one of our National Board facilitators in Tacoma, and then they see each other at a partners meeting and they share ideas. I will get emails all the time back from them. We always have that kind of constant connection to NBCTs. I am out in their schools a lot, and I go to both the National Board and group meetings as well as the Pro Cert seminars. I bring a lot of that

back and share it with the faculty to use as examples or use as the starting point for tasks or assignments in the prep program. So it is kind of this back and forth, where we bring a certain set of eyes from the university and the academy out into the schools and into the group meetings, and then we bring the best, or master teacher examples from practice and bring it back into the academy. So there is this close connection and not a disconnect between what our faculty are asking of students and expecting as best practices and actually how it is playing out in schools.

III. REFLECTIONS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The major challenges faced by PLU revolve around the future of available funding, and the ability to sustain the momentum they have created in the last two years. Overall, the faculty and staff at PLU continue to be energized by the new documented entries process and their connections to the NBCT network. As may be expected, however, there have been and continue to be issues related to keeping the work central and making sure that every faculty member has a good depth of understanding of what the documented entries are meant to accomplish.

The School is committed to continue supporting candidates after the WI funds are gone. The nature of the funding for this support will depend on the district: some are paying for scholarships for the entire amount, others for part of the total, and still others pay the National Board fee while the teachers have to pay the support fee. However, funding for faculty to continue to co-facilitate support groups does not appear to be forthcoming. The Center director summarizes this challenge:

That is one of our challenges, trying to figure out how we can continue with faculty involvement in National Board facilitation without the grant, because essentially our support fees are going to pay the National Board teachers. Many of our faculty want to continue to be involved with the monthly facilitation. They are really energized by it, and it keeps them connected in the same way that I am connected to actual best practices and classrooms and the realities of public schools today.

Given the benefits that faculty have accrued as a result of participating in these groups, it is hoped that they will continue by donating their time to the program. However it is not expected that this will happen, and the future of faculty involvement is not known.

The dean of the School of Education is an unabashed, outspoken champion of the National Board and its processes and practices. In addition, a few key faculty and one FTE fully devoted to work related to the National Board have made possible the kind of changes the School has made to their programs. It is difficult to imagine how these changes could have happened – or the speed with which they did happen – without the support of these individuals. A large part of maintaining the momentum will rest on them, which could present challenges down the road.

College professors often feel a strong sense of ownership about their courses and what counts as evidence for learning. Asking professors to turn their thinking upside down so that all instruction is driven by evidence of student learning and not “coverage of a curriculum or a chapter” has been a challenge. Still, the majority of faculty have eagerly participated, and the

rest are moving in that direction. PLU has the advantage in this case of being small and intimate, thereby making such changes possible in a relatively short period of time.

Ultimately, the School of Education at PLU would like to play a large role in creating a seamless continuum of professional growth for their teachers, starting with the experience for the undergraduate degree of creating reflective documented entries, through the professional certification process, and then, for some, National Board certification. To get there, the PLU faculty must subscribe to the kind of reflective practice that the National Board exemplifies. To this end, the dean, key faculty, the director of the Center for Partnerships, and a network of NBCTs are working together on university, Pro Cert, and candidate support courses to instantiate the National Board process and practice within the School and in their partner districts. They understand that there is a tension between the vision of accomplished teaching championed by the National Board and the realities teachers face in the classroom. They also believe that it is within this space that real learning, renewal, and growth happens. The dean explains:

When teachers at all levels, pre-service all the way up, are presented with standards—a clearly articulated set of expectations and with authentic work products that show they meet the standards that they organize—they actually get better as teachers. It is not just a demonstration of knowledge that they possessed already. It is actually a way to get knowledge, to get skills, to get better. I tried to articulate this back to our faculty, that it is more powerful than when we come in and just try to teach them didactically. The learning that comes from having the picture of excellence on the one hand, and on the other hand, real world challenges of students in real classrooms is powerful. These teachers work within a classroom and provide evidence, not that they are always there, but they are on their way to meeting this accomplished teaching. That is how they learn.

EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

I. BACKGROUND

The EWU Education Department

Eastern Washington University, located in Cheney, 14 miles outside of Spokane, is a major supplier of teachers for the northeastern region of Washington.¹⁷ EWU graduates roughly 425 students with B.Ed. degrees and resident certificates annually, with upwards of 800-1000 undergraduates enrolled in education programs in a given year. EWU has about 700 students enrolled in graduate programs, which can take from two to six years to complete, and graduates roughly 125 students with M.Ed. degrees per year. There are roughly 20 tenure track faculty in the department, along with adjuncts.

Until just a few years ago, membership in the EWU Education department was quite stable, with a strong core of deans and faculty members who served for many years. There has also been a tradition in which the majority of faculty divide themselves along the lines of whether they teach in graduate or undergraduate programs. More recently, several new faculty members have been appointed. There has also been turnover in the deanship, with an interim dean serving in 2003-04 and the College hoping to appoint a permanent one. Change in faculty membership and department leadership, along with new state education policies (such as the creation of the Professional Certificate) and new institutional movements (such as the rise of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE] and its standards for teacher preparation), have put some pressure on the department to bring long-held traditions into contact with new ideas.

EWU Involvement in the Washington Initiative

EWU responded to an invitation to apply to join the WI in February 2002.¹⁸ The EWU faculty member who initially responded to the WI opportunity identified a second faculty member who is well respected in both the EWU Education department and in the schools and asked her to co-coordinate the program. The two of them attended meetings sponsored by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) to learn more about the support of NBPTS candidates; these meetings motivated them to bring the WI to their department because the NBPTS standards for teaching and practices of supporting teachers' documentation of their practice were very consistent with their own values and with the direction they hoped their department would move. When they received the grant, they invited another well respected mainstream faculty member to serve as a facilitator, alongside one of the co-coordinators.

¹⁷ Other education programs serving the eastern part of the state include those at Gonzaga and Whitworth, both private institutions, and at Washington State University. WSU is also a participant in the WI; an account is included in this report.

¹⁸ Both the University of Washington (UW) and WSU had been participating for a year already, facilitating support groups for candidates.

In the 2002-03 academic year, the EWU project supported 25 candidates in small groups scattered from Cheney and Spokane, to Leavenworth and Tonasket. Three faculty members served as facilitators, partnered with NBCTs. As an experiment in serving highly dispersed rural teachers, they tried to make use of a state-wide interactive television system for remote facilitation, but they learned that that did not provide a satisfactory experience for either the teachers or the facilitators, so they returned to an in-person model. In 2003-04, the EWU program doubled in size, supporting another 46 candidates.

II. FACULTY FACILITATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE NBPTS AND ON THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE WASHINGTON INITIATIVE

The faculty members initially involved in the WI program at EWU had some prior knowledge of the NBPTS, and were favorably disposed toward it because they believe it advocates deliberate teaching, fosters teacher reflection on student learning, and recognizes teaching for the complex work that it is.

Perspectives on the NBPTS

One faculty member, who became familiar with the NBPTS a decade ago, said that it immediately appealed to her because it focuses on "teaching excellence." She believes excellence in teaching not only benefits students' achievement but also their attitudes and overall success. She has considered the five propositions of the NBPTS as important guides to the preparation of teachers since then.

Another faculty member, who also became familiar with the NBPTS in the 1990's, said the portfolio process appealed to him because of the emphasis on documenting practice on video.

Looking at videos together is advantageous for anyone because it is a good way to talk about teaching, and that isn't done enough. Ten minutes of video can prompt a good 2-hour discussion. What's important is that the videos focus on the students not the teacher, so the conversation can be about student work. And it's collaborative, and that's good.

This faculty member has long used video in the preparation of administrators in the educational leadership program.

Benefits to faculty participation

One faculty member said that the overall value to IHE faculty of being involved in the WI is that it brings them into direct contact with real teachers, and with teaching and learning in the classroom:

Teachers are using theoretical ideas in their practice and that helps faculty keep the theory-practice link. It also reminds university faculty about the realities of teachers' work, how hard and busy it is, and the extent of the personal sacrifice they make to do this National Board process.

Another person said that facilitating a group of NB candidates gave her “firsthand understanding” of the portfolio process. Even more importantly, she learned more about “processes of excellent teaching” by observing and helping teachers reflect on and write about their teaching, and seeing how they interpreted their best practices. She noted, “This was helpful to me in thinking about how I could help my own students become better at reflecting on their teaching practice.” This faculty member said the experience was also helpful in giving her a way to help her students become more deliberate in their practice: that is, more objective- and assessment-based in their teaching and their reflections.

Concerns about the NBPTS

While the faculty members involved in the WI believe strongly in the NB propositions and professional development practices, they have some criticism. For example, one person is concerned that the structure and scope of the entries do not give teachers room to write about theory and research-based practice. This faculty member believes that reflecting on one’s practice and one’s current students in the context of theory would broaden their perspectives as professionals:

The reflection model is individualized, but there is always a global picture. How does what I learn about my students this year apply to my students next year?

Another faculty member’s concern about the NB process is the “thumbs-up, thumbs-down” nature of the judgments. Because teaching is such a complex art and craft, he questions whether NBPTS evaluators can make good judgments from videos and written entries. He saw several people that he and others know are really good teachers – teachers who, if he were a principal, he would hire – who did not achieve certification.

III. BUILDING SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: CONTRIBUTIONS OF WI PARTICIPATION TO EWU EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Building advocacy for change

The Washington Initiative came to EWU at a time when the faculty were having to address the issue of NCATE standards and the mandate to develop a Professional Certification (Pro Cert) program that could compete well in the teacher marketplace in eastern Washington. The faculty members who brought the WI to EWU saw it as an opportunity for learning but also as a potential catalyst for discussion and positive change in the department. The strategic decision to involve several popular and well respected faculty members in the WI meant that the WI work would likely be infused into discussions at faculty meetings. During the first year, 2002-03, there was no deliberate pro-NBPTS agenda but the faculty members’ experiences entered into topics that naturally arose:

The first year we said okay, let’s try this and see what we can learn, and bring into our faculty discussion things that we can, related to teachers in general. We meet twice a month, for about three hours each time. There was no particular agenda to bring things into our faculty meetings, but there was no faculty meeting I attended last year where the

National Board didn't come up. We had three people out in the field working with these teachers, and they brought us [references to the candidate support] into every conversation that we had the whole year.

Some discussions that focused on how NBPTS standards and practices might imply changes to core programs—such as the B.Ed. teaching certificate and the M.Ed.—were contentious. By the end of the first year, however, these discussions had led to a number of faculty members becoming interested in exploring new possibilities based on what their colleagues working with WI candidates were learning:

The strong faculty advocates [those who were facilitating NB support groups] of course were actually seeing changes in the teachers they were working with, the NBC candidates, and that was a powerful incentive, I think that also came up at faculty discussions—that these teachers are learning something, not by being in a master's program, but by using standards to interpret their classroom work. I think that opened up some different types of talking about our master's program.... So that first year ended with some people just plain sick of hearing about it, but a bunch of other people starting to understand that this is different.

In the second year (2003-04), the WI coordinator built on this initial momentum in several ways. First he invited to the EWU campus the representative of the NBPTS who had led the NB meeting he had attended the previous year. He then invited a group of local NBCTs to visit the department. He asked these NBCTs to participate in a focus group about their experience with the NB portfolio and its value to them. Other faculty members observed this focus group and then had a chance to ask the NBCTs questions and talk with them. An especially powerful part of this second day was the NBCTs' statements about the value of the portfolio process. Since most already had master's degrees, they could compare the value of the two:

Almost all of them have a master's degree, and being the polite people that they are, the way they would phrase that was. "[the portfolio] has been the best professional development experience of my career," very sweet, and they kept saying that, repeatedly. But one of them was very vocal about the fact that getting her master's degree was just jumping through hoops.

Ultimately, these two days seemed to garner more acceptance of the idea that processes of documenting and analyzing their practice were of real value to teachers and should be taken seriously in discussions of improvements to programs:

It was fun, it was very good. I think [the NB representative] was able to put it into a national context which some of our people needed and to help them understand that a graduate program could incorporate this with better results than running a traditional program. The second day, having the teachers there, I think validated that this was indeed a learning process and after that meeting, people really did come on board.

Following on this, the WI coordinator invited seven EWU faculty to accompany him on a visit to Pacific Lutheran University. They spent two days meeting with faculty and students to learn how PLU is deeply integrating NB standards and professional development practices into their

undergraduate and graduate programs.¹⁹ The EWU group (which included the directors of the undergraduate and graduate programs) immersed themselves in discussions with PLU deans, faculty members, and students:

We met for several hours with the assistant dean and faculty members who had over the past two years crafted the program, just got a good orientation to it. We also met with some graduate students and teachers who are in the graduate program and they helped us understand what integrating the National Board process into the graduate program looks like, and what changes they made in their classrooms. That was very good. We had dinner with the dean and other people and processed a lot of ideas. The next morning, we met with the undergrad program people and got a clear picture of what they were trying to accomplish at the undergrad level and how they were using documented entry. Then we went into a seminar with students and observed while they went through a lesson, and then we worked with them in groups, interacted with them. Afterward, we had a chance to debrief with everybody again after that and go over with the professors to kind of get our final questions answered. It was a very interactive process.

The group then met to discuss implications that they would like to present to the full faculty:

We came away from that session very fired up. I then held a focus group with those people at a dinner meeting to collect information to present to the faculty at our next meeting and they are going to make some very strong recommendations and proposals.

By involving key faculty in gaining firsthand knowledge of the NB portfolio process and NBCTs, the WI coordinator was able to introduce NB standards and practices into department dialogue. After some interest arose, he was able to engage a larger proportion of the faculty in direct interaction with representatives of the NBPTS, with NBCTs, and with PLY faculty who were making strides toward program development in their School of Education. Together, these experiences began to bring about changes in degree programs at EWU.

Contributions to EWU Education programs

Undergraduate teaching certificate (B.Ed.)

The NB portfolio process appealed to the WI director because it expected teachers to document their own teaching and make a case for its quality through written reflection on this evidence. He believed this was a more professional and rigorous approach than one in which supervisors monitored teachers' practices against a set of competencies. Discussions of the advantages of a "documented entry" approach led to a change in the admissions process for the B.Ed. certificate program:

The context of discussing the National Board at the undergrad level became 'what does evidence look like?' ...How do we go toward having our teaching candidates provide evidence, rather than having supervisors provide evidences of competency, or both actually. We need both for the state. So the portfolio process for the professional admissions before student teaching got changed. It became a little bit more of the

¹⁹ See the accompanying account of the PLU experience in this report.

candidates actually doing a presentation of what they had done in the classrooms and what they had learned and observed, etc.

Discussions are also underway for the creation of an alternative undergraduate program that more fully incorporates a documented entry process. This would not supplant the traditional program – to try to change it would be too difficult and contentious – but it would be an alternative:

Rather than try to change the undergraduate program entirely, because it is so course- and credit-bound, they are going to recommend that we set up a new cohort model, an undergrad program that incorporates the NBC process and the whole documented entry process into an undergraduate certification program...It will be a choice.

Patterns of student choice over time are likely to continue influencing faculty perspectives.

Master's in Education (M.Ed.)

One of the more challenging conversations in the department has been about implications of NBPTS standards and the candidacy process for the master's degree, specifically the nature of the culminating project. A good number of faculty believe strongly that the existing project, which involves a formal literature review as part of a five-chapter paper, reflects an academic standard that is important to the university. Some others, however, believe that teachers do not see that paper as being of value for their teaching practice. Instead, these faculty – including those involved in the WI – suggest that the portfolio that candidates produce may be at least as rigorous and also more directly valuable to teachers:

Whether doing a NBPTS portfolio could satisfy the project requirement, that was one of the questions... because [with the traditional project] people were going out and doing a paper, and spending all of that time doing a paper isn't the learning experience that we think it is, because little of it is going directly to improve classroom practice.

By 2003-04, enough faculty were interested in the portfolio as an alternative master's project that a new action research course was created that would support it:

This year, because those discussions were coming from two very strong faculty members, some other faculty members were allowed to start to think differently, and I think that is how it worked. And this year we have actually added a new research course to our master's program, called 'field-based inquiry' and that is very new...and very much the National Board is seen as a model for that.

Those who are involved with the WI believe this new alternative will be attractive to teachers; however, they do not see the traditional master's disappearing because it is so deeply embedded in the fabric of department.

The new Professional Certification (Pro Cert)

The WI coordinator was asked by the department to develop a Pro Cert program after an earlier proposal had not been approved by the state. This task gave him another opportunity to infuse NBPTS-like teaching standards and practices of documenting evidence into the department by building them into the Pro Cert, which will affect large numbers of teachers. He established the first pilot EWU Pro Cert program in the Walla Walla district, combining the Pro Cert program with a master's. Walla Walla, while some 165 miles distant from Cheney, offered the advantage of having a history of functioning like a satellite program offering M.Ed. degrees to cohorts of teachers. Further, the Walla Walla district had made it known that they wanted a different kind of master's from the traditional program. For EWU, this signaled a demand from their marketplace that they had to change in order to compete with WSU:

The district didn't want our traditional master's program anymore, and they said basically, 'give us something else or we are going to go with WSU.' So, we put together a program to integrate the Professional Certification standards into the master's program. That was another way to kind of crack the traditional mold, because right up front, I let it be known that the product of this master's program would not be a research report; it would be a portfolio documenting classroom evidence of changes in teacher behaviors as a result of meeting the Pro Cert standards.... it is just now coming to a head, because the orals for the first cohort start this spring.

For this Pro Cert plus master's, the final project is an action research project with a written analysis of how the teacher's own practice aligns with learning theory.

For this pilot in Walla Walla, the faculty members responsible for coursework include local school and district personnel as adjunct faculty. Regular EWU faculty serve as advisors and will sit as second readers on orals committees. The WI coordinator is optimistic about how the first crop of non-traditional M.Ed. presentations will be received because he feels they have been well prepared to document and represent their practice to others: "They are very evidence based – much, much more so than many of our graduate teachers normally are."

The WI coordinator also envisions that this first cohort of Pro Cert plus M.Ed. students will make an impression on the faculty about the congruence between the Pro Cert and the NB certification:

Our faculty are going to make the connection between the portfolio process for the National Board and the documented entry process for the Pro Cert, and the PLU trip helped a whole bunch there.

Further development of the Pro Cert – especially if it produces greater demand from teachers – could end up exerting more pressure on the traditional on-campus master's.

Educational Leadership program

One of the faculty members who has participated in the WI is a former principal who teaches in the Ed Leadership program. As a result of this, that program's faculty have discussed the necessity that all administrative interns know about the Washington Initiative's support system

for candidates, and about the NBPTS, because they will encounter NBCTs in their schools and districts, and they are likely to encounter the influence of the NBCT in Pro Cert programs in which their new teachers participate.

Roles for NBCTs in EWU programs

In informal ways, NBCTs who have been part of the EWU candidate support are already serving as a kind of role model for faculty members interested in learning about the NBPTS and also about the practices of highly effective teachers. The WI coordinator would like NBCTs to play more prominent and formal roles in the future. For example, he would like to see NBCTs trained to serve as facilitators of groups of Pro Cert candidates because the NBCTs have the right kind of experience to apply, and also they exist as a resource that can be tapped to reach the large numbers of teachers who will need to receive their professional certification.

In order to meet the needs of the teachers out there, we have to do some things that we haven't done before and so one of these changes is to hire National Board certified teachers as adjunct faculty to run our Pro Cert cohorts. What I am proposing, especially in our rural areas, is that we have National Board teachers who have gone through our support program; we know them and they know us, and they are in a position to work as adjunct faculty with the university, in districts, in small groups, six to ten teachers to accomplish both the Pro Cert and also to help beginning teachers learn the documented entry process. But it is a training stretch and just because they have experienced it, it doesn't mean that they can necessarily teach it. They might be able to model it, but it is very contextual and it is another curriculum we will have to create, but that is an important move... But that is going to be contentious.

Prospects for the future

Without funding, the future of the NB candidate support program is, in the words of the WI coordinator, "up for grabs." He is working on strategies for creating programs that will operate on dollars directly from the candidates. The alternatives he is envisioning would mean "the university has to make some changes. Basically, this whole initiative, now that people are buying into it, is causing people to rethink everything." It is too soon to tell how quickly the department and the EWU central administration will be able to decide how far they can bend existing structures associated with personnel and teaching responsibility.

Discussions about the master's degree are sure to continue, especially with the operation of the Pro Cert with master's that is being piloted in Walla Walla and also started up in Spokane. If this program turns out to be popular among teachers – which the WI coordinator thinks it will – the creation of market demand will put two kinds of pressure on the department. One is about who should and can serve as faculty; the other is about the nature of the M.Ed. coursework and project. One faculty member describes the issue this way:

We have one very contentious issue coming up and that is we need to integrate the Pro Cert standards into our graduate program, because if we don't, we are not going to have a graduate program ...Right now the Spokane Pro Cert master's program is running, but it is an off-campus program, and none of our faculty are teaching in it, so it doesn't pay them an FTE. Well if we do that one more year, then we won't have an on-campus

graduate program. ...the off-campus program in Spokane is a competing graduate program and so the students who have started the Pro Cert graduate program this year would normally have started our on-campus graduate program this year. So their numbers are down and they are having to cancel some classes. If that happens again, they are out. So the issue is: will they change their graduate program to incorporate the Pro Cert standards? [Others in the department] have already said that they want to run a Pro Cert only program in Spokane [without the master's]. But that is not what teachers want, and if that is the way they want to go, then I suspect that WSU is going to step in.

In some sense prospects for a future without WI grant funds depend upon the department's capacity to adapt to policies and standards that are at play currently (such as NCATE, NBPTS, and the state's Pro Cert), and upon its willingness to adapt to the demands of the teachers who are in the EWU marketplace.

IV. REFLECTIONS ON THE EWU EXPERIENCE

Eastern Washington University has been a participant in the WI for only two years with a modest number of faculty members participating directly, and yet their involvement is on the way to having a quite substantial impact on degree programs.

A strategic approach to using WI as a resource for change

The WI coordinator saw the standards and practices of the National Board as being consistent with a direction he (and some others) hoped the College of Education faculty could move. By offering well established faculty members an opportunity for firsthand involvement, he strategically built up support from within the College. In this way the WI became a resource for those interested in enhancing programs by making them more consistent with NB standards and practices.

The strength of institutional routine *vs.* the trends of the policy system and marketplace

EWU, like all universities, has strong institutional routines related to appointing faculty, calculating FTE and funding, and changing course and degree requirements. To follow through on changes that have begun and to sustain work with teachers beyond the grant, the EWU faculty will need to address the challenge of compelling the university to adapt some of its ways of doing business. However, universities also need to attract students from the marketplace to survive. The need to tap into teacher demand for Pro Cert and M.Ed., and to compete well with WSU, may help keep the momentum going toward infusion of National Board standards and practices into EWU programs.