

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

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November 1, 2006

Dr. Richard C. Seagrave
Anson Marston Distinguished Professor Emeritus
2153 Sweeney Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-2230

Dear Professor Seagrave:

I write on behalf of the leadership team of our Department to express strong support for retention of ABET's current prohibition of "dual-level accreditation" of engineering programs. The rule prohibiting dual-level accreditation has achieved the uniformity that exists in today's accreditation landscape for civil engineering programs. Of 211 accredited civil engineering programs, 209 are accredited at the BS level. By providing the core competencies for licensure, the BS degree is now and will remain the attractive level for accreditation.

We anticipate further benefits of the current prohibition rule will be realized as the implementation of ASCE Policy 465 "raises the bar" for professional licensure to BS + MS/30. We very strongly support the tenets of Policy 465 and actively participate on the current ASCE Body of Knowledge Committee. The implementation of Policy 465 brings new complexity and the need for flexibility in evaluating the MS/30 — particularly the "30." The "30 credit hours" option creates a vast array of new possibilities to satisfy licensing requirements, thus defying a principal goal of standardization that is achieved through accreditation. At worst, opening the door to dual-level accreditation will be a direct assault on the intended flexibility of MS/30 because State licensing boards will have to reconcile accredited paths with non-accredited paths. If MS accreditation becomes valued, then the non-accredited paths available under the "30 credit hours" will be resisted. If both paths are equally accepted, then MS accreditation will serve no role. Consequently, we cannot envision that accreditation of *both* BS and MS programs can ever accomplish a real benefit given that the "30 hours" option will lie outside the purview of accreditation processes.

The substantial uniformity present in today's accreditation system should remain as highly valued and seen as useful in this coming environment. If the rule is not retained, we believe the existing uniformity across the accreditation landscape will be cast into disarray. Dual-level accreditation will certainly create a large, new administrative burden on universities, and we remain unconvinced that the greater expense will provide any benefits at all. On the contrary, our expectation is that State licensing boards will find it satisfactory — and routine — to recognize the very many existing, non-accredited MS degrees when the BS + MS/30 requirements are fully implemented.

We strongly encourage ABET to retain the rule prohibiting dual-level accreditation.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert H. Dodds, Jr.".

Robert H. Dodds, Jr.
Head, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Professor and M.T. Geoffrey Yeh Endowed Chair of Civil Engineering

cc: Stuart G. Welsh
Jeffrey S. Russell
Thomas A. Lenox
Richard O. Anderson
UIUC: CEE Faculty, Alumni Board