

CommunityMatters™

A Monthly Newsletter for the ABET Community

November 2007

InsideABET

ABET Names Five New Fellows

Five new Fellows of ABET have been named. The ABET Fellow Award is presented annually to recognize those individuals who have given sustained quality service to the ABET-related professions, in general, and to education within the ABET disciplines, in particular, through the activities of ABET. The Fellow Award presentation occurs at ABET's annual Awards Banquet, held in conjunction with the ABET Annual Meeting. This year's banquet, which was a special celebration of ABET's 75th Anniversary, took place on November 1 in Incline Village, Nevada.



Della T. Bonnette, Ph.D., Vice President for Information and Technology at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, was recognized "for outstanding contributions and leadership in comput-

ing and accreditation, including team chair and program evaluator training, training material development, and promotion of accreditation through peer presentations."



Phillip E. Borrowman, P.E., Senior Vice President at Hanson Professional Services, Inc., was recognized "for more than two decades of service to accreditation, dedica-

tion to promoting accreditation within his professional society, and active engagement as an advisor and a leader in engineering, computing, and international accreditation."



Daina M. Briedis, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Chemical Engineering at Michigan State University, was recognized "for dedication, exemplary service, and commitment to ABET resulting

in improved training considered key to the proper implementation of evolving accreditation processes."



Susan O. Schall, Ph.D., a Process Improvement Consultant, was recognized "for outstanding contributions to the Partnership to Advance Volunteer Excellence and for exemplary service

to both the Engineering and Computing Accreditation Commissions."



A. Joseph Turner, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Computer Science at Clemson University, was recognized "for being both pioneer and faithful proponent of accreditation for programs in comput-

ing, providing leadership and selfless contributions to the computing disciplines and American higher education."

2007 ABET President's Awards for Diversity

Three ABET President's Awards for Diversity were presented at ABET's 2007 Commission Summit on October 31. The awards recognize educational units, individuals, associations, and firms for extraordinary success in achieving diversity and inclusiveness or for facilitating diversity and inclusiveness in the technological segments of our society. The awardees were the following:

— continued on page 2

LookAhead

Nov. 16 — Registration deadline for December 1 Faculty Workshop on Assessing Program Outcomes, San Antonio, TX

Dec. 1 — Faculty Workshop on Assessing Program Outcomes, San Antonio, TX

Dec. 18 — Registration deadline for January 12 Faculty Workshop on Assessing Program Outcomes, Phoenix, AZ

Jan. 7-11 — Institute for the Development of Excellence in Assessment Leadership (IDEAL), Phoenix, AZ

InsideABET

— continued from page 1

- ▶ **California State University, Los Angeles, College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Technology**
“For previous and on-going promotion of MESA (Math-Engineering-Science Achievement), including sharing procedures and techniques with a broader audience, in promotion of math, engineering, and science among underrepresented groups.”
- ▶ **Oklahoma State University, Okmulgee, Information Technologies Division**
“For success in promoting and including American Indians in the engineering and science disciplines and promotion beyond the campus borders.”
- ▶ **Lee Snapp**
“Nominated by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society for efforts to establish engineering programs at Tribal Colleges and Universities.”

Nominations for the 2008 ABET President’s Award for Diversity will be accepted until September 1. Please visit www.abet.org/diversity.shtml for information.

2007-2008 ABET Officers Installed

ABET installed its new slate of officers at the biannual meeting of its Board of Directors, held in Incline Village, Nevada, on November 3, 2007. The following individuals will serve as the Executive Committee of the ABET Board of Directors for the 2007-2008 term:

- ▶ President: **L.S. “Skip” Fletcher, Ph.D., P.E.**, Texas A&M University

- ▶ President-Elect: **Joseph L. Sussman, Ph.D.**, Bayer Corporation
- ▶ Secretary: **Janet B. Perper, CIH**, Carr and Perper, Inc. (retired)
- ▶ Treasurer: **Daniel J. Bradley, Ph.D.**, Fairmont State College
- ▶ Past President: **William S. Clark, P.E.**, BellSouth Corporation (retired)
- ▶ Board Representative to the Executive Committee: **Larry A. Kaye, Ph.D., P.E.**, ExxonMobil Research and Engineering Company (retired)
- ▶ Board Representative to the Executive Committee: **James R. Plasker, P.E.**, American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing

Several new Board members were also installed:

- ▶ American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE): **Larry J. Feeser, Ph.D., P.E.**, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- ▶ American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE): **David B. Meredith**, Pennsylvania State University (Fayette Campus)
- ▶ ASME: **Franklin T. Dodge, Ph.D.**, Southwest Research Institute
- ▶ IEEE, Inc.: **Bruce A. Eisenstein, Ph.D.**, Drexel University
- ▶ ISA: **Donald Ray Gillum**, Texas State Technical College
- ▶ Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration (SME-AIME): **Arden D. Davis, Ph.D., P.E.**, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

Anniversary Publication Hits Highlights of Movement for Quality Assurance in Technical Education

Last month, ABET published its 75th Anniversary Retrospective, *A Proud Legacy of Quality Assurance in the Preparation of Technical Professionals*. Three years in the making, the retrospective is the first publication of its kind: A thoughtful investigation of quality assurance in U.S. postsecondary technical education. Edited by long-time ABET volunteer and engineering educator, John W. Prados, Ph.D., P.E., the volume combines annotated prose, original documents, historical photographs, and reflections from volunteers to tell an interesting tale of the people, places, and paradigms that have shaped the organization and its role in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology education.

The full-color, hardback book, measuring 11”x11”, would make a great gift for educators in the ABET disciplines and for ABET volunteers. It is also a worthy addition to the campus library. You can view the complete table of contents and index on ABET’s website at www.abet.org/order.shtml. To purchase, download the order form available on this page.

Congratulations Award Recipients!

Welcome New Board Members!

The “**VolunteerSpotlight**” feature will return next month.

ABETOnline

- ▶ Find assessment workshop opportunities at www.abet.org/workshop.shtml.
- ▶ Order ABET’s 75th Anniversary Retrospective book at www.abet.org/order.shtml.
- ▶ Apply for a seat in IDEAL 2008 at www.abet.org/ideal.shtml.

CommunityMatters™

CommunityMatters is a monthly publication of ABET, Inc., produced for and distributed to more than 3,000 stakeholders, including ABET-accredited programs; ABET commission, Board, and council members; ABET member societies; and program evaluators.

Editor: Gloria Rogers, Associate Executive Director of Professional Services

Writers: Liz Glazer, Communications Manager

Keryl Cryer, Communications Specialist

Questions or comments: eglazer@abet.org

CommunityMatters is online: www.abet.org/newsletter.shtml

Copyright© 2007 by ABET, Inc.® Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

Assessment101

Assessment Tips with Gloria Rogers, Ph.D.

Direct or Indirect Measures? Are We Asking the Right Question?

There is an increasing amount of discussion and confusion on whether the ABET accreditation criteria require direct measures of student learning to satisfy the criterion related to the “demonstration of student outcomes.” One of the concerns is that, if the criteria require direct methods, there is going to be a return to a very prescriptive approach to accreditation, and this resistance is growing — as it should be. The ABET criteria for accreditation do not say anything about the use of direct measures. However, the silence should not be misinterpreted as indifference.

Direct measures are a classification of assessment methods. These methods can be used to assess knowledge or skills attained by students through the direct examination or observation of student performance. A direct method is NOT just one method but a number of methods that can be used to assess student knowledge and abilities. To say that a program should not be required to use a specific direct measure is absolutely correct. The choice of which direct method is most appropriate for any given program squarely resides with the program faculty; however, using no direct method should not be an option if we require evidence that students demonstrate learning that can be attributed to program effectiveness.

Experience would indicate that the resistance to the use of direct assessment methods is rooted in the fact that many programs have not yet defined their program outcomes in ways that support the use of direct measures. That is, it is not clear WHAT should be assessed. When the outcome has not been defined, a direct method of assessment cannot be used in any meaningful way. That is,

if the outcome, “an ability to communicate effectively,” has not been defined by a few measurable performance indicators that are the focus of program-level data collection, the outcome cannot be assessed using direct methods. That is, if the outcome is not defined, it cannot be measured in any valid way that is a true measure of student knowledge or ability.¹

To say that the expectation that programs are using direct measures of student learning is not supported by the criteria misses two important fundamental premises upon which the criteria were developed: continuous quality improvement (CQI) and the demonstration of student learning outcomes. The fundamental principles of CQI require direct measures to assure quality.² Student outcomes cannot be demonstrated in any valid way without direct measures.

The current debate over the use of direct methods of assessment needs to shift to a discussion about the underlying problem about the use of direct measures — that is, the expectation that programs are defining their outcomes in ways that are measurable. In the absence of recognizing the need for measurable outcomes, the debate over direct or indirect methods is hollow. Once the outcomes have been defined, the issue of direct measures generally goes away because now the program knows WHAT data to collect and can collect data in ways that are meaningful and produce information that can be used for meaningful improvement and not just data that can be reported to an external agency.

¹ See “Direct and Indirect Assessments: What Are They Good For?” in the August 2006 issue of *CommunityMatters*, available online at www.abet.org/newsletter.shtml.

² See “Continuous Quality Improvement and Assessment of Student Learning” in the May 2007 issue of *CommunityMatters*, available online at www.abet.org/newsletter.shtml.

2008 Assessment Activities

Faculty Workshop on Assessing Program Outcomes

December 1, 2007, San Antonio • January 12, Phoenix • February 9, Tampa
March 15, Nashville • April 12, Baltimore • May 17, Baltimore • June 21, Pittsburgh

Institute for the Development of Excellence in Assessment Leadership (IDEAL)

January 7-11, Phoenix • August 4-8, Baltimore

Visit www.abet.org/workshop.shtml for details. Also, keep an eye out for ABET’s new webinar series, featuring programs on both assessment and the accreditation process.

YourCorner

Board of Directors

This is a great time to communicate with your society about the issues addressed at the fall Board of Directors meeting. Consider sending an e-mail noting outcomes of the meeting to your society liaison. Or, composing an executive summary may be more appropriate. If you’re not sure who your society liaison is, contact Stephanie Brown at ABET headquarters: sbrown@abet.org.

Commissioners

Did you complete the PEV performance appraisal forms yet? Your feedback is a vital part of assessing needs for improvement among ABET PEVs.

Institutions

Programs visited in 2007: It is very important that you fill out your team chair and program evaluator performance appraisal forms. Your feedback is never provided to your team chair or program evaluator until the accreditation cycle ends and your program has received an action. Your participation in this process is essential to ABET’s continuous quality improvement efforts.

If you weren’t able to attend the 2007 Commission Summit, you can find the presentations from this event — and many others — online at www.abet.org/presentations.shtml.

Member Societies

The fall meeting of the ABET Board of Directors took place on November 3. Be sure to communicate with your Board representative(s) about the important issues addressed.

Forgot how to check for new PEV applications? It’s easy! Just visit <http://abethome.abet.org/online> and enter the same user name and password you use to enter the society liaison area.

Program Evaluators

Don’t let your expense report form gather any dust. Expense reports should be submitted to your team chair within 10 days of the visit. The more quickly headquarters receives it, the more quickly the reimbursement process will be completed. You can find the form at <http://service1.abet.org/pev>.

Member Societies

ABET is a federation of 28 professional and technical societies representing the fields of applied science, computing, engineering, and technology:

American Academy of Environmental Engineers	Health Physics Society
American Congress on Surveying and Mapping	IEEE, Inc.
American Industrial Hygiene Association	Institute of Industrial Engineers, Inc.
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Inc.	ISA
American Institute of Chemical Engineers	Materials Research Society
American Nuclear Society	National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers	National Institute of Ceramic Engineers
American Society of Civil Engineers	National Society of Professional Engineers
American Society for Engineering Education	Society of Automotive Engineers
American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc.	Society of Manufacturing Engineers
American Society of Safety Engineers	Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration, Inc.
ASME	Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers
Biomedical Engineering Society	Society of Petroleum Engineers
CSAB, Inc.	The Minerals, Metals, and Materials Society



111 Market Place, Suite 1050
Baltimore, MD 21202-4012

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BALTIMORE, MD
PERMIT No. 5196