

CommunityMatters™

A Monthly Newsletter for the ABET Community

February 2009

InsideABET

Seoul Accord Formally Established and Signed During Recent Computing Accreditors' Meeting

In 2007, representatives of six accrediting bodies for the computing disciplines signed the Seoul Declaration, which outlined a shared vision regarding the accreditation of educational programs in the computing and IT-related disciplines and the intent to develop an agreement for the mutual recognition of accredited baccalaureate-level computing programs among the signatories of the accord.

On December 6, 2008, representatives of the signatory organizations reconvened in Seoul, Korea, to continue the work necessary to establish the Seoul Accord and to sign the agreement. The agreement is intended to be analogous to the Washington Accord, but for computing, rather than engineering, programs. The signatories of the Seoul Accord include ABET, the Australian Computer Society (ACS), the British Computer Society (BCS), the Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS), the Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE), and the Accreditation Board for Engineering Education of Korea (ABEEK).

The meeting participants discussed many topics necessary to found such an agreement and approved the following tenets and bylaws:

- ▶ The attributes for graduates in the computing fields;
- ▶ The rules and procedures for the agreement, including the requirement of unanimous consent for the admission of new signatories and the election of an individual, rather than a signatory, to serve as the accord's chair; and
- ▶ The wording of the document to be signed by the six founding signatories.

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VolunteerSpotlight

Joe Turner

A. Joseph Turner, Ph.D., spent much of his professional career at Clemson University, working as an assistant professor of mathematical sciences, a professor of computer science, and the division head for computer science before his retirement from the institution. Then, he served a year as the Dean of the College of Information Systems at Zayed University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

However, Joe's service to the accreditation of the computing fields is even more impressive than his professional accomplishments. He was chair of the Computer Sciences Accreditation Commission (CSAC), the predecessor to ABET's current Computing Accreditation Commission (CAC), and between these two commissions, he has been the team chair for accreditation visits to approximately 25 institutions. Additionally, Joe has served ABET as a member of its Financial Model Task Force, the Evaluation Team for the Participation Project, and the Training Task



Force that developed the Partnership to Advance Volunteer Excellence (PAVE) training model, and he has been a support facilitator for recent training sessions to prepare new program evaluator candidates.

Joe's current activities include serving on the CAC Executive Committee, as chair of the CAC's Training Committee, and as a member of the ABET Accreditation Council Training Committee. Furthermore, he missed the ceremony when he was inducted as an ABET Fellow in 2007 because he was representing ABET during the signing of the Seoul Declaration, which established a shared global vision for the accreditation of computing and IT-related programs. Recently, Joe became the first chair of the Seoul Accord, a mutual recognition agreement among computing accreditors.

"Working on behalf of ABET to establish the Seoul Accord has been rewarding and has offered me another great opportunity to contribute to the improvement of computing education in other parts of the world," he said.

LookAhead

- Feb. 3 — Reduced registration fee deadline for Feb. 7 Faculty Workshop on Assessing Program Outcomes, Atlanta, GA
- Feb. 7 — Faculty Workshop on Assessing Program Outcomes, Atlanta, GA
- Feb. 9 — "Preparing for the Site Visit 2009-2010 for *Computing* Programs" Webinar
- Feb. 11 — "Choosing Assessment Methods" Webinar
- Feb. 13 — "Preparing for the Site Visit 2009-2010 for *Technology* Programs" Webinar
- Feb. 17 — "Preparing for the Site Visit 2009-2010 for *Engineering* Programs" Webinar
- Feb. 19 — "Preparing for the Site Visit 2009-2010 for *Applied Science* Programs" Webinar
- Feb. 28 — ABET Board Executive Committee Meeting, Baltimore, MD

InsideABET

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A. Joseph Turner, Ph.D., a member-at-large of the Executive Committee of ABET's Computing Accreditation Commission (CAC), was elected as the initial chair of the accord and will serve until a formal election during the accord's first regular meeting takes place on June 20, immediately following the International Engineering Agreement (IEA) Education Accords in Kyoto, Japan.

Turner and ABET's Managing Director for International Business Development George D. Peterson, Ph.D., P.E., represented ABET at the Seoul meeting when the accord was formalized and will collaborate with representatives from the other signatories to continue the good work that came from that meeting. Short-term goals include establishing operational procedures for the initial secretariat, a position that ABEEK has agreed to take on; a conflict of interest statement for signatories; procedures for admission of new signatories into the accord; and other documents and procedures as needed.

ABET's Financial Model Keeps Site Visit Fees Stable, May Increase Maintenance Fees

When ABET adopted a new financial model a few years back, it had a clear goal in mind: to match the revenue generated from services with those who benefited from those services.

Under the former financial model, visit fees funded the majority of accreditation activities, even those not associated with visits. From year to year, the number of ABET visits varied, causing annual revenue to fluctuate. Also, for several years, maintenance fees — annual charges to institutions for maintaining accreditation records and status — did not increase

or did so at such a small rate that they failed to keep pace with inflation. Together, these factors created financial uncertainty for ABET's day-to-day operations and made it difficult to budget for upcoming years.

Linking Revenue and Projects

ABET's new financial model links revenue generated with the projects that the fees support. For example, domestic visit fees support the costs for domestic accreditation visits and commission activities that relate to those visits. For this reason, ABET has frozen domestic visit fees for the past two years. Plans are to continue this practice until visit fees and actual costs align or until increases in volunteer travel expenses require that ABET make an adjustment.

By contrast, the annual maintenance fees support ongoing accreditation operations. ABET expects to adjust these fees as needed. For example, over the 2007-2008 accreditation cycle, maintenance fees increased from \$475 to \$600 per domestic program. The impact on the average institution with three programs (and one base fee) was an increase of only \$500. ABET expects to continue annual increases of 5 to 10 percent for maintenance fees over the next few years.

Enhancing Services to Our Institutions

Over the past two years, increases in maintenance fees have been used to enhance services that directly benefit the institutions that house ABET-accredited programs. Among many upgrades, ABET has improved its volunteer training and evaluation processes, is now accepting credit card payments, has developed online registration for faculty workshops and meetings, and now offers the online Request for Evaluation tool that many schools used for the first time last month.

In 2009, ABET will take advantage of technology through a major software development

initiative. Designed to bring more efficient web-based processes to institutions and ABET member societies, the projects will include a new team chair assignment matrix; a tracking system for program evaluator applications, biographies, and assignments; and a new volunteer training management system. The result will be a more effective, accessible process for preparing ABET volunteers for evaluation visits and for managing the process following their time on campus. Also coming is an electronic self-study submission portal and a new web portal designed specifically for ABET's 29 member societies.

ABET's new financial model helps to meet three equally important goals of continuous operational improvement, quality service to its accredited programs, and cost control.

Banta to Keynote Best Assessment Symposium

Planning continues for this year's Best Assessment Processes Symposium, which will take place in Indianapolis on April 3 and 4. This event, which provides a series of 50-minute presentations as well as 80-minute and 3-hour workshops, helps educators learn about assessment methods and how to use them to improve student learning outcomes.

ABET is pleased to announce that **Trudy W. Banta** will serve as the keynote speaker for this year's symposium. Banta is a Professor of Higher Education and the Senior Advisor to the Chancellor for Academic Planning and Evaluation at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. In addition, she has developed 22 national and 15 international conferences about assessing quality in higher education and is the founding editor of the bimonthly periodical *Assessment Update*.

More about this year's keynote and the latest information about the 2009 symposium is available at www.abet.org/bap.shtml.

ABETOnline

- ▶ Apply or nominate someone for the position of ABET Executive Director at www.abet.org/edsearch.shtml.
- ▶ Register for one of the ABET webinars at www.abet.org/webinar.shtml.
- ▶ Sign up for ABET's E-NEWS alerts at www.abet.org/sign_up.shtml.

CommunityMatters™

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Assessment101

Assessment Tips with Gloria Rogers, Ph.D.

Building a Culture of Assessment

You've been working diligently on your ABET-related

continuous improvement process, and you're anxious to create a "culture" of assessment where good practices become a part of "who you are" rather than "what you do." Having a culture of assessment eliminates the anxiety that is created when it is time for "the visit" because your data collection processes are continuous and systematic. You've already developed approaches that support the evaluation and decision-making process necessary to make improvements.

Developing a culture of assessment is a much higher calling, however, than programmatic assessment. It requires everyone getting on board, sharing the same goals, and speaking the same language.

First, let's define what "culture" means. According to *Webster's*, culture is "the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization." Sometimes, cultural components are concrete; more often, they are amorphous.

Aspects such as attitudes and practices prove more difficult to measure than the sturdier components of program assessment: written materials; formal and informal policies and procedures; organizational and reward structure; social knowledge; vocabulary; and rites and rituals.

Moving from program assessment to a culture of assessment requires a much greater contribution of resources: time, money, and commitment to name but a few. Plus, engaging everyone in such a venture can be akin to herding cats. There are many aspects that need to be corralled and moving in the same direction. It's a challenging task, but the results of a successful cultural transformation are worth it.

The following is a list of the key components that your program or institution will need to achieve a culture of assessment:

- ▶ **Strong Leadership:** A powerful sponsor to articulate, advocate, and drive the cultural vision.
- ▶ **A Guiding Coalition:** Well-respected and enthusiastic opinion leaders who represent key stakeholders and are committed to keeping their constituents informed.
- ▶ **A Strategic Communications Plan:** A clear strategy to communicate the benefits, goals, expectations, and progress throughout the transition. Committing to the cultural change publicly in many forums increases credibility — and accountability.
- ▶ **A Sense of Purpose:** Buy-in that is shared among all key constituencies. Delineate roles and responsibilities. Publicize the path you are on and celebrate critical milestones. Recognize those who push the process forward in a meaningful way.
- ▶ **A Clear and Meaningful Process:** One that is broadly understood and supported by facts, research, and analysis.
- ▶ **Common Language and Criteria:** When working across disciplines, a lack of alignment on language, criteria, and intent of outcomes often blocks progress. Start with the basics by ensuring a common understanding and acceptance of assessment terminology and principles.
- ▶ **Dedicated Resources:** In the midst of our nation's economic downturn, all institutions have to make tough financial decisions. Building a culture of assessment cannot be accomplished without forethought and committed resources. Ignoring this requirement will jeopardize your efforts' success.
- ▶ **A Realistic Timeframe:** Cultural change cannot be decreed. People change as it becomes apparent that it is in their best interest to do so.

Upcoming Assessment Activities

Faculty Workshop on Assessing Program Outcomes

February 7, Atlanta • April 18, Baltimore • June 13, Austin • October 27, San Antonio

ABET Webinars

Now through April 22

Best Assessment Processes Symposium XI

April 3-4, Indianapolis

YourCorner

Board of Directors

The spring Board of Directors meeting, which will take place on Saturday, March 28, will be held at the Marriott BWI Airport near Baltimore. Rachele Daucher will send details about making hotel reservations and meeting registration within the next couple of weeks.

Commissioners and Program Evaluators

If you have not already evaluated your 2008-2009 cycle team, please log on to <http://abethome.abet.org/evaluation> and do so as soon as possible. All you need is your ABET user name and password. Your evaluations are a vital part of ABET's continuous improvement processes, and we need your input!

Institutions

If your program was visited during the 2008-2009 cycle and you have not evaluated your visit team, please log on to <http://abethome.abet.org/evaluation> and do so. Your evaluation is a vital part of ABET's continuous improvement processes. (Note that the evaluation will **not** be shared with the team until **after** a final accreditation action is determined this summer.) The user name and password needed to complete your evaluation were sent to you via e-mail. If you need these re-sent, don't hesitate to contact ABET's Accreditation Director Maryanne Weiss at mweiss@abet.org.

Member Societies

Some time this month, the new society website should be available for the majority of your ABET interactions and responsibilities. The first use will be for the face-to-face aspect of the program evaluator candidate training. Also, we will hold a Train-the-Trainer session for new facilitators on May 16 in Baltimore. More details will be coming soon.

In late January, you should have received notice if your society needs to make appointments to fill vacancies on the ABET Board of Directors before their March 28 meeting. If you did not, please contact Member Services, either Donna Clark at dclark@abet.org or Hope Joseph-Nelson at hnelson@abet.org.

Member Societies

ABET is a federation of 29 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.	International Council on Systems Engineering
American Institute of Chemical Engineers	International Society of Automation
American Nuclear Society	Materials Research Society
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers	National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying
American Society of Civil Engineers	National Institute of Ceramic Engineers
American Society for Engineering Education	National Society of Professional Engineers
American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc.	SAE International
American Society of Safety Engineers	Society of Manufacturing Engineers
ASME	Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration, Inc.
Biomedical Engineering Society	Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers
CSAB, Inc.	Society of Petroleum Engineers
	The Minerals, Metals, and Materials Society



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