

# CommunityMatters™

A Monthly Newsletter for the ABET Community

March 2009

## InsideABET

### ABET Breaks Record For Evaluations During 2008-2009 Accreditation Cycle

Now that the final visits for the 2008-2009 accreditation cycle have concluded, ABET can report that it has had a record-breaking year with 895 programs evaluated over this year's cycle. These evaluations included 675 general or interim visits as well as 220 interim reports.

The number of total evaluations, which includes general reviews, interim visits, and interim reports, rose 23 percent from last year's total of 729. In addition, the number of programs visited jumped approximately 16 percent, from last cycle's 582 programs (532 general reviews and 50 interim visits) to this year's 675 visits (609 general reviews and 66 interim visits).

The following shows the change between the number of visits that each of the ABET commissions conducted during the 2007-2008 cycle compared to the current cycle:

- ▶ Applied Science Accreditation Commission (ASAC) — 11 visits for 2007-2008 to 15 visits for 2008-2009
- ▶ Computing Accreditation Commission (CAC) — 62 visits for 2007-2008 to 72 visits for 2008-2009
- ▶ Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) — 346 visits for 2007-2008 to 446 visits for 2008-2009
- ▶ Technology Accreditation Commission (TAC) — 163 visits for 2007-2008 to 141 visits for 2008-2009

One of the reasons for the increase in programs visited, particularly the sharp rise for EAC, is the significant number of non-domestic programs that submitted Requests for Evaluation for this accreditation cycle. Of the 47 non-domestic programs visited, CAC visited one program, EAC visited 43 programs, and

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## VolunteerSpotlight

### Mary Leigh Wolfe

When **Mary Leigh Wolfe, Ph.D.**, first became a program evaluator for the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers in 1990, she really didn't know much about what volunteering for ABET involved.

"I was an assistant professor and had just observed an accreditation visit from afar," she said. "Then, I learned that my society's accreditation committee nominated me to be a program evaluator. I was interested in teaching, and the more I learned about this, the more interesting it sounded."

Nearly 20 years later, Mary Leigh has emerged as an exceptional leader on ABET's Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC). She was the commission's Chair for the 2007-2008 accreditation cycle and is now serving as its Past Chair until the end of July. In addition, she has conducted the "Preparing for the Site Visit" webinars specifically for engineering programs for the past two years and will chair an engineering roundtable during next month's Best Assessment Processes Symposium.



Mary Leigh, who is a professor and the Assistant Department Head for Teaching in the Department of Biological Systems Engineering at Virginia Tech, says that the biggest challenge of being an ABET volunteer is finding the time to do each job the way she feels it needs to be done. This was especially true following the April 2007 tragedy that shook her institution, but even then, Mary Leigh never let her commitment to ABET waver. She continued to edit and move statements from that year's accreditation visits to the next stage in a timely fashion.

So, why does Mary Leigh dedicate so much time and expertise to her ABET activities?

"I strongly believe that accreditation is an important component in improving engineering education," she said. "Furthermore, I'm from a small discipline, and I've had the chance to meet some great people from so many other technical disciplines, as well as from all kinds of industries. It's been a very broadening experience, and the vast majority of the time, it's also been a lot of fun."

## LookAhead

March 3 — "What the Accreditation Criteria Don't Tell You" Webinar

March 4 — "Defining Learning Outcomes" Webinar

March 18 — "Developing Rubrics" Webinar

March 19 — "Completing the Institutional Appendix" Webinar

March 25 — Hotel registration deadline for April 18 Faculty Workshop on Assessing Program Outcomes, Baltimore, MD

March 26 — "Developing and Assessing Program Educational Objectives" Webinar

March 28 — Spring ABET Board of Directors Meeting

# InsideABET

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TAC evaluated three programs for first-time general reviews. These visits took ABET volunteers to 11 countries outside of the U.S.: Bahrain, Chile, Egypt, India, Kuwait, Jordan, Mexico, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Special thanks to each of ABET's more than 1,400 volunteers who participated in evaluations for this year's accreditation cycle. This process could not work without the generous gifts of your time, expertise, and enduring dedication. Also, ABET thanks the faculty, staff, and students at each of the institutions that our volunteers visited for your hospitality during the visit and your cooperation over the rest of the accreditation cycle.

## Diversity Award Renamed for Late Public Director, Nominations Due May 31

Late last year, the ABET Board of Directors renamed its President's Award for Diversity to honor of one of its late Public Members, **Dr. Claire L. Felbinger**.

Felbinger, a former Chair of the Master of Public Administration Program at American University, served as a Public Member of

the ABET Board from 1998 to 2004. Public Members (now called Public Directors) are not affiliated with the areas that ABET accredits through either training or practice yet serve as voting members of the ABET Board.

During Felbinger's six years as a Public Member, she served ABET in many positions, including as Chair of the Public Member Committee and as ABET's representative on the National Academy of Engineering's Committee on Diversity. Under her leadership, the Public Member Committee brought ABET's diversity issues to the Board's attention, leading to initiatives such as issuing ABET's formal policy statement on diversity, collecting and publishing diversity statistics about the organization's volunteer pool, and laying the foundation for the ABET President's Award for Diversity.

Felbinger passed away in her home on May 28, 2008. The award that she helped to establish has been renamed the Claire L. Felbinger Award for Diversity in her memory.

Today, this award is presented annually to recognize U.S.-based 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. Along with the change in the award's

name, the annual deadline to submit nominations for the award has been moved from September to May 31.

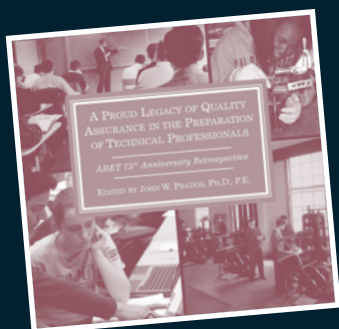
If you are interested in submitting nominations for the Claire L. Felbinger Award for Diversity, visit [www.abet.org/diversity.shtml](http://www.abet.org/diversity.shtml) to learn how. All nominations must be submitted electronically to ABET Headquarters, and self-nominations are encouraged.

## ABET's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Retrospective Books Now 75 Percent Off!

In late 2007, ABET published a volume titled *A Proud Legacy of Quality Assurance in the Preparation of Technical Professionals* to commemorate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This full-color, hardback, coffee table-style book, edited by long-time ABET volunteer and engineering educator, **John W. Prados, Ph.D., P.E.**, combines prose, original documents, historical photographs, and reflections from volunteers to tell an interesting tale of the people, places, and paradigms that have shaped ABET and its role in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology education.

The retrospective book is a limited edition collector's item that would make a great gift for educators in the ABET disciplines and for ABET volunteers. It is also a worthy addition to almost any campus library. And now, the limited number of books that are still in stock are available for a special price of only \$15 apiece. That's an incredible 75 percent off the \$65 cover price!

To purchase your copy of this remarkable retrospective volume, visit [www.abet.org/order.shtml](http://www.abet.org/order.shtml) and download the order form at the bottom of that page. Limited quantities are available, and offer good only while quantities last. Limit five books per customer. Cost includes shipping and handling.



## Get Your Copy of the ABET's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Retrospective Book! Now Only \$15!

Limited Quantities Available!  
Visit [www.abet.org/order.shtml](http://www.abet.org/order.shtml) to learn more!

## ABETOnline

- ▶ Register for next month's Best Assessment Processes Symposium in Indianapolis at [www.abet.org/bap.shtml](http://www.abet.org/bap.shtml).
- ▶ Sign up for one of this month's webinars at [www.abet.org/webinar.shtml](http://www.abet.org/webinar.shtml).
- ▶ Try the updated PEV Training Pre-Work: [www.abet.org/\\_TrainingCD/index.htm](http://www.abet.org/_TrainingCD/index.htm).

## CommunityMatters™

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**Editor:** Lil Hughes Knipp, Director for Marketing & Member Services

**Writer:** Keryl Cryer, Communications Specialist

**Questions or comments:** [kcryer@abet.org](mailto:kcryer@abet.org)

**Personnel and address changes from institutions:** [accreditation@abet.org](mailto:accreditation@abet.org)

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# Assessment101

## Assessment Tips with Gloria Rogers, Ph.D.

### Telling Your Story – Part 1

What is an efficient and effective way to tell the continuous quality improvement (CQI) story about your program outcomes? Whether you are preparing an internal document or you are doing a report for the accreditation visiting team, you want your story about the processes that you use and the effect of your improvement efforts to be clear and engaging.

First, it is important to note that there is no one way to present your processes. The ABET accreditation policies and procedures do not require a particular format for presenting your CQI processes and results. Programs have the latitude to develop a report or display that best suits their needs. The method discussed below is only one way that your department may consider.

Also, remember that the purpose of the CQI process is to show that the program has a process in place that enables it to demonstrate the level to which the program outcomes have been attained. It should also show how the data collected have been used to improve processes designed to achieve the outcome. To demonstrate these efforts, I would have a binder with a tab for each outcome. Behind each tab for each outcome, I would have the following (in this order):

**1) An outcome matrix.** This contains everything the reader needs to know at a summary level. On one page, the outcome matrix includes the following:

- ▶ Performance criteria assessed as indicators of outcome attainment
- ▶ Strategies used to enable students to learn, practice, demonstrate, and get feedback on their performance (usually courses but could also be co-curricular)
- ▶ Assessment methods used to collect the data (e.g., rubrics, test items, etc.)
- ▶ Where the data are collected
- ▶ When the data are collected
- ▶ Who is responsible for making sure the data are collected
- ▶ Who will evaluate the results

(See the example available at [www.abet.org/Linked Documents-UPDATE/Assessment/Student Learning Outcomes Matrix \(3\).doc](http://www.abet.org/Linked Documents-UPDATE/Assessment/Student Learning Outcomes Matrix (3).doc).)

**2) Instruments used in data collection** (not the data itself, just the rubrics, test items, and/or project description that were used in the data collection process). If improvements in the instruments are a part of the improvement process, include the revised instruments as well. ***This is an important part of the improvement process.***

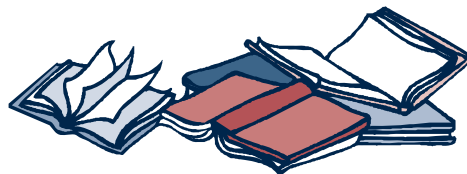
**3) Data collection methodology.** In a couple of paragraphs, describe how and how often the data were collected. If sampling was used, explain how the sample was chosen to be sure that it was representative of the cohort. The sample could be within a cohort (two of three sections of a given course) or across cohorts (students who completed the program in 2003 and then students who completed the program in 2006).

**4) Results.** Remember that descriptive statistics generally will work in this process. I would use bar charts that show at least two cycles of data collection (first cycle and second cycle results after improvements were made). Many programs have been engaged in this process long enough to have multiple cycles.

**5) How the results were used to make improvements.** Again, keep it simple.

Material behind each outcome tab should not be more than 3 or 5 pages long (depending on the number of instruments used and included).

I would also find a way to identify how each performance criterion was addressed in the curriculum materials. Each program will have course displays as evidence of meeting the curriculum criterion. It would be helpful to the reviewer to highlight which program outcome performance criteria are taught, practiced, developed, and/or assessed at the course level. Some programs have done this through a color coding scheme or even by creating a “map” of the display room that identified where the reviewer could find course-related materials that were used to enable students to demonstrate the attainment of the criteria related to the outcome.



# YourCorner

## Board of Directors

Nominations for the 2009 Linton E. Grinter Distinguished Service Award, ABET Fellow Awards, and Claire L. Felbinger Award for Diversity are now being accepted. The award nomination forms are available on the ABET website at [www.abet.org/awards.shtml](http://www.abet.org/awards.shtml). The deadline for submission for all awards is Sunday, May 31.

## Commissioners

If you are a new commissioner or have been reappointed for the 2009-2010 accreditation cycle, look out for a letter welcoming you to the commission for the upcoming year. This important communication will provide you with details about your responsibilities, the upcoming meeting in July, specifications for the portrait that will run in the *2010 Commission Directory*, and much more.

## Institutions

If your program was visited in the fall of 2008 and you have not received your draft statement yet, hang on! The statements are still being processed and should be on their way shortly.

## Member Societies

Notices were sent in January to those societies who need to appoint or reappoint new Board members. Appointments are due back to Donna Clark ([dclark@abet.org](mailto:dclark@abet.org)) by March 20.

Also, keep in mind the ABET Board policy regarding conflict of interest forms. Whenever your society's accreditation committee meets, either in person or via conference call, all participants must complete the ABET Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Compliance Form, and it must be returned to Hope Joseph-Nelson at [hnelson@abet.org](mailto:hnelson@abet.org) or via fax at (410) 843-7186.

## Program Evaluators

Have you seen the updated PEV Training Pre-Work that new volunteer candidates will complete as part of their training? Visit [www.abet.org/\\_TrainingCD/index.htm](http://www.abet.org/_TrainingCD/index.htm) to see what your future colleagues are learning and/or to refresh your own basic knowledge about the accreditation process.

# 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



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

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