

CommunityMatters™

A Monthly Newsletter for the ABET Community

June 2009

InsideABET

Michael Milligan Becomes ABET Executive Director



Michael K. J. Milligan, Ph.D., P.E., has been selected to serve as ABET's third Executive Director. Following a five-month, global search that attracted nearly 120 applicants, the

ABET Board of Directors chose Milligan to lead the organization. He will assume the position on Monday, June 1.

ABET's President **Joseph L. Sussman, Ph.D.**, cites the confluence of Milligan's remarkable personal commitment to education, his success in managing complex projects, and his expertise in leading diverse groups of people as the pivotal factor in the Board's decision to select him as Executive Director.

"In Michael, we realized the leadership qualities and acumen ABET needs to drive towards the realization of its mission," Sussman said. "He is exceptionally intelligent yet easily approachable. He is an award-winning fiscal and operating manager while being equally skilled at obtaining successful performance from disparate groups working together. Michael has committed himself to lifelong learning while investing considerable time educating others. He has volunteered as an ABET program evaluator in the past and is a senior member of IEEE."

Milligan's extensive record leading complex organizations around the globe will serve him well as he promotes ABET's growth in its core accreditation business worldwide. Most recently, he led an Aerospace Corporation team of scientists, engineers, and support staff charged with assisting in the development of an environmental satellite for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-

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VolunteerSpotlight

Win Phillips

Winfred M. Phillips, D.Sc., is currently serving as Vice President for Research, as Professor of Mechanical Engineering, and as Don and Ruth Eckis Professor of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Florida, as well as President of the University of Florida Research Foundation.

Still, he has an even more impressive résumé as one of ABET's most dedicated volunteers. He became an ABET Fellow in 1993, served as ABET President for 1996-1997, and received the Linton E. Grinter Distinguished Service Award, ABET's highest honor, in 2000. For much of this decade, he has represented ABET for the Washington Accord.

Originally signed in 1989, the Washington Accord is an international agreement among the accreditors of engineering degrees. Graduates of accredited programs in any of the signatory countries are suggested to be recognized by the other signatory countries as having met the academic requirements for entry to the practice of engineering.

Currently, Win is serving a two-year term

as the Chair of the Washington Accord. In this position, he oversees the work of the Accord in receiving applications and conducting reviews for admission to the Washington Accord. Furthermore, he serves on the Governing Group that oversees the International Engineering Alliance secretariat that manages the affairs of the Washington



Accord, as well as the technology-focused Sydney and Dublin Accords, both of which ABET is a provisional member.

"The work of the Washington Accord and the other agreements is a vital part of the credentialing and mobility of engineers worldwide," he said. "It is a global mar-

ketplace, and today's technical professional may be working anywhere in the world."

"Also, on a personal note, I believe that both technical and economic progress and world peace are people-to-people endeavors," Win continued. "The Washington Accord is a critical contribution to those goals."

The next meeting of the Washington Accord, as well as several other accords and agreements, will take place this month in Kyoto, Japan.

LookAhead

June 13 — Faculty Workshop on Continuous Quality Improvement, Austin, TX

June 13-14 — Program Evaluator Training, Baltimore, MD

July 22 — ABET Board of Directors Briefing Webinar

August 3-7 — Institute for the Development of Excellence in Assessment Leadership (IDEAL), Baltimore, MD

August 6-7 — Industry Advisory Council Meeting, Baltimore, MD

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tion (NOAA) at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. From 2003-2006, Milligan embarked upon an ambitious international research program involving radio frequency technology, space weather, and superconductivity on behalf of the U.S. Air Force (USAF). As Chief Scientist for the program, he visited universities and research institutes in Europe, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, and Africa — in all, more than 30 countries.

For four years prior to his international assignment, Milligan served as the Deputy Department Head and Associate Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering at the U.S. Air Force Academy. In this position, he developed, directed, and taught advanced electrical and computer engineering courses and was a senior member of the accreditation team preparing for the ABET evaluation visit.

“Education is clearly among Michael’s highest priorities,” says Sussman.

Milligan earned a Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin, an MSE from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, and a BS from Michigan State University — all in electrical engineering. He completed the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Officer Levels of the Professional Military Leadership Schools for the USAF, attaining the highest level of certification (Level III) from the Department of Defense Program Management in Systems Engineering, Research, and Development. Additionally, he has earned an MBA from Western New England College.

“In great part, I credit my career achievements to the quality of the education I have received,” he says. “It is my good fortune to now lead the very organization that ensured the quality of my undergraduate program, as well as the ones I taught at the Air Force Academy. They were all ABET-accredited.”

ABET Annual Meeting to Continue Last Year’s Conversations

ABET has announced the theme for its 2009 Annual Meeting — *Addressing Contemporary Challenges Through Collaborative Transformations & Educational Innovations*. This event will take place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Riverwalk in San Antonio, TX, on Thursday, October 29, and Friday, October 30.

The 2009 Annual Meeting will be an interactive event that features a series of sessions that continue the conversations from last year’s Annual Meeting. Among the topics to be covered are improving the pathways into the STEM fields, encouraging diversity in these areas, and adapting to millennial learning models.

Please look for further details about the event and registration information later this summer at www.abet.org/annual.shtml.

IDEAL Helps Assessment Novices Develop Effective Plans for Their Programs

Gloria Rogers, ABET’s Managing Director of Professional Services, will be conducting another session of the Institute for the Development of Excellence in Assessment Leadership (IDEAL) in Baltimore this summer, from August 3 through 7.

IDEAL is a 4½-day, professional development opportunity that is designed specifically to help those who possess “beginner to marginal” assessment experience prepare to lead the development and implementation of a program assessment plan that improves student learning and documents program effectiveness. IDEAL participants work with colleagues to develop assessment knowledge

and skills and should leave the program having completed an assessment implementation plan they can initiate at their home institutions.

Following attendance in the program, participants will become IDEAL Scholars, which entitles them to a year of extensive support as they implement their assessment plans.

Acceptance into IDEAL requires completing an application form and securing a letter of support from the applicant’s supervisor. Only 40 individuals will be selected for this summer’s event, so visit www.abet.org/ideal.shtml to download the application today!

CommunityMatters To Go Digital Only in the Fall

In an effort to be more environmentally conscious, ABET has decided to make this newsletter a digital-only document starting with the September 2009 issue. That means, if you still wish to receive the important information that this newsletter contains, you have to make sure that ABET has your current e-mail address.

If you have an account with a username and password, please go in and update your e-mail address as well as your other information promptly:

- ▶ If you are a program evaluator or team chair or have ever served as an evaluator, visit <http://main.abet.org/evaluator>.
- ▶ If you are from an institution but have never been an ABET volunteer, visit <http://main.abet.org/institution>.
- ▶ If you are from an ABET society, visit <http://main.abet.org/society>.

If you do not have a password, use the “forgot password” option on the log-in screen to retrieve your information and then update your account.

ABETOnline

- ▶ Apply for this summer’s IDEAL at www.abet.org/ideal.shtml.
- ▶ Sign up for ABET’s *E-NEWS* alerts at www.abet.org/sign_up.shtml.
- ▶ Limited time offer! Get your copy of ABET’s *75th Anniversary Retrospective Book* at www.abet.org/order.shtml.

CommunityMatters™

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Assessment101

Assessment Tips with Gloria Rogers, Ph.D.

Continuous Improvement or Continuous Annoyance? Part Two

In the previous issue, this column dealt with concerns about how some programs were creating laborious assessment machines that yielded little in terms of meaningful results but a lot in terms of faculty irritation. It was also stated that part two of this article would deal with the “other side” of the issue: expectations of the program evaluator.

The interpretation of criteria 2, 3, and 4 — related to program educational objectives, program outcomes, and continuous improvement — is one that must be left to the appropriate commissions and their leadership. The sheer numbers of program evaluators (well into the 1,000 range) reflect the challenge that the commissions (consisting of ABET visiting team chairs) face in assuring consistency of findings based on the evidence provided. What is the role of the evaluator? It is all about evidence-based judgment.

For all of the criteria, evaluators must ask themselves if the program processes are adequate to determine compliance with each of the criteria. When questions arise about program quality, the evaluator must base his or her professional judgment on the evidence that the program provides. When questions arise around continuous quality improvement, the evaluator should ask¹:

- 1) Are assessment processes adequate to determine achievement of each of the criterion?
- 2) Are assessment processes robust enough to identify shortcomings and achievements?
- 3) Are assessment processes sustainable?
- 4) Will assessment processes lead to process improvements if appropriate?

What do each of these questions imply?

- 1) Do the processes support the valid assessment of the criterion? That is, would a reasonable person look at the processes being used and determine that the conclusions reached by the program are supported by sound evidence?
- 2) Are the data collection methods being used valid? Are the methods being used

to assess the outcome relevant — do they assess the outcomes as directly as possible? Do the methods provide results with clear implications for educational program evaluation and improvement?

- 3) Is the level of effort to gather the data sustainable over time and at a level that enables the program to implement continuous improvement (not just because ABET is coming)?
- 4) Do the evidence-based conclusions enable the program to design and implement curricular changes that will lead to attainment of outcomes? Are the outcomes defined and mapped to the curriculum in ways that enable the program to understand how the curriculum enables students to learn, practice, develop, and demonstrate their learning? Do the faculty have a common understanding of how the outcomes are operationalized² and implemented in the curriculum so that the evidence leads to meaningful and appropriate improvements?

Program evaluators do not need to be “assessment experts,” but they should be knowledgeable about meaningful assessment process so that they can appropriately evaluate the program’s compliance with the accreditation criteria. ABET volunteer leadership has been very deliberate in not being prescriptive in HOW a program assesses their achievement of criteria 2, 3 and 4. However, this should not be interpreted as an “anything goes” stance. Program evaluators are encouraged to be informed about what constitutes a “continuous improvement” process and apply their best professional judgment to the achievement of the criteria. Just as faculty must use their best professional judgment in determining student achievement of complex intellectual processes in the classroom, so must evaluators when reviewing the evidence of achievement of the accreditation criteria.

Are we perfect? No, probably not. Are we continuously improving? We are currently developing processes that will provide experienced evaluators with the support they need to continuously improve their own evaluation skills. We need to continue to work together to assure the quality of the process as well as the quality of the outcomes.

¹ These questions are used in the program evaluator training.

² Outcomes have been defined so they can be measured in the context of their programs.

YourCorner

Board of Directors

This summer’s Board Briefing will be on Wednesday, July 22, at 1 p.m. EDT. Please provide any topics or questions to be addressed to Rachele Daucher at rdaucher@abet.org.

Commissioners

The Summer Commission Meeting is just around the corner, so make your reservations by June 8. Contact ABET’s Accreditation Manager, Ellen Stokes, at estokes@abet.org if you need assistance.

You should already have received your assignment(s) for fall 2009 visits. It’s time to make initial contact with your institutional representative(s) and schedule dates for your visit(s). Log into the secure website and click “Manage Visit Team” for contact information.

Institutions

Thanks for your cooperation over the past year! Don’t forget to update your contact information for when this newsletter goes digital in the fall.

Member Societies

Most of you have been using your new society website for the majority of your interactions for ABET. Make sure you keep your information on <http://main.abet.org/society> up-to-date so we can assist and serve you better. As we continue to make additions and changes, we will keep you updated by e-mail and also in the announcements section on your site’s first page.

We are planning the 2009 Society Summit for September 14 near the airport here in Baltimore. Complete details will be sent to you by the methods above. We would also appreciate it if you would send suggestions on topics you would like to discuss or ideas you would like to share with the other societies and/or ABET. Send them to Donna Clark at dclark@abet.org.

Program Evaluators

ABET’s member societies are assigning PEVs to visits, so please be sure that your bio information is up-to-date. Follow the link at www.abet.org/pev.shtml to log in and make needed changes.

Member Societies

ABET is a federation of 30 professional and technical societies representing the fields of applied science, computing, engineering, and technology:

American Academy of Environmental Engineers	IEEE, Inc.
American Congress on Surveying and Mapping	Institute of Industrial Engineers, Inc.
American Industrial Hygiene Association	International Council on Systems Engineering
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Inc.	International Society of Automation
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	SAE International
American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc.	Society of Fire Protection Engineers
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
Health Physics Society	The Minerals, Metals, and Materials Society



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