



The Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

September 12, 2008

*WACTE members are the
22 Schools or Colleges of
Teacher Education at more than
65 locations throughout the state of
Washington:*

Antioch University (Seattle)

Argosy University (Seattle)

Central Washington University
(Ellensburg, Lynwood, Lakewood,
Moses Lake, Wenatchee, Des
Moines, Yakima)

City University of Seattle
(Bellevue, Everett, Seattle, Renton,
Tacoma, Vancouver, Port Hadlock,
Port Angeles, Centralia,
Mt. Vernon)

Eastern Washington University
(Cheney, Spokane)

Gonzaga University (Spokane)

Heritage University (Toppenish,
Yakima, Seattle, Moses Lake,
Omak,
Tri-Cities, Wenatchee)

Lesley University (Bellingham,
Clarkston, Everett, Hoquiam, Kent,
Mt Vernon, Olympia, Port Angeles,
Port Orchard, Seattle, Spokane,
Tacoma, Tri Cities, Vancouver,
Wenatchee, Yakima)

Northwest University (Kirkland)

Pacific Lutheran University
(Tacoma)

Seattle Pacific University

Seattle University

St. Martin's University
(Lacey, Ft. Lewis, McChord AFB)

The Evergreen State College
(Olympia)

University of Puget Sound
(Tacoma)

University of Washington
(Seattle)

University of Washington
(Tacoma)

University of Washington
(Bothell)

Walla Walla College

Washington State University
(Pullman, Spokane, Tri-Cities,
Vancouver)

Whitworth University (Spokane)

Western Washington University
(Bellingham, Bremerton, Everett,
Oak Harbor, Seattle)

Chairman Dan Grim
Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force
110 Fifth Ave. SE
Olympia, WA 98504-0999

Dear Chairman Grim:

Thank you very much for considering my input on a topic of great importance to the state of Washington and to me – maintaining a high quality professional education force for the state. I know you are looking at the current licensure system and want to ensure the standards in place produce the quality teachers desired without imposing undue burdens on career changers who possess expertise in high need areas such as mathematics and science. I hope my personal experience as a career changer might help inform your deliberations.

In 1993, I retired from the Air Force after a 23-year career. In considering my retirement options, I realized I had spent much of my career as an instructor or examiner pilot. I also realized I had been teaching a form of geometry all that time, so I decided to become a math teacher. I did not have a teaching certificate, so I explored my options. While I did not find any automatic solutions, I did find a variety of options and a willingness to adapt my program based on my previous academic accomplishments and work experiences. As a result, I earned my secondary teaching certificate through Saint Martin's College in a little over a year's time.

During that time, I found my classroom experiences with K-12 students the most valuable part of my certification program. I learned to work with a far different population than I had during my Air Force career and received valuable mentoring from several experienced teachers. While I had the subject knowledge required to teach math, I had not tried to apply it with K-12 students. I do not believe teaching candidates can demonstrate mastery of pedagogy through a test any more than the Air Force measured a pilot's ability to fly with a written test. Teacher candidates need to work in diverse classroom settings with real students and receive regular feedback from an experienced professional educator. When a candidate is deemed ready for licensure, the best measure of effective teaching in a pre-service setting is a rigorous performance measure administered by a professional educator, not a written test. These activities can best occur in the context of one of the wide variety of approved teacher education programs available in this state.

Today, a career changer interested in becoming a teacher has many more options than I did in 1993. At City University of Seattle, where I have worked for the past six years, candidates can choose between one-year and two-year master's degree programs, or alternative route programs that focus on mathematics, special education, and English language learners. Candidates can complete alternative route programs in as little as a year,



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depending on their prior experience. We also have bachelor degree programs and endorsement only programs. All programs, except the one year master's degree program, conduct classes at night or on weekends to allow candidates to continue working while earning their teaching certificate. All programs depend heavily on field experiences with mentor teachers for candidate preparation. Candidates in all programs meet all state requirements for licensure, including completion of West-B and West-E tests and the Performanced-based Pedagogy Assessment (PPA). These programs are typical of the variety available in the 21 approved programs offered by WACTE institutions.

When I think about the conversations I have had with prospective candidates for my programs at City University, I know the biggest obstacle most candidates faced was the ability to provide for their families while preparing for a new career as a teacher, not the availability of a suitable program. When I recall my own career change, that was my biggest concern, also. Rather than focusing on alternative certification, I would encourage you to focus on ways to ease the financial burden of career changers, both during their programs and after.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

J. Patrick Naughton, President Elect (effective October 2008)
Washington Association for Colleges of Teacher Education

Cc Members of the Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force