

### Chapter 49 Statewide Conferences Summary

During the month of September, the Division of Professional Education hosted two statewide conferences for institutions of higher education, one in Harrisburg and the other in Clarion. Despite the challenge of the timing of the conferences so close to the beginning of the semester, both conferences were well-attended with nearly every teacher preparation institution represented. The purpose of the conferences was to bring representatives of all teacher preparation institutions together for conversations about the updated Chapter 49 requirements. PDE wanted to clarify the process for program application and approval, solicit feedback on draft versions of initial program applications, explain the procedure for seeking an extension, and provide forums for sharing potential solutions to the challenges of program development. The highlight of the conferences was the small group sharing of ideas; attendees provided numerous ideas for peers and PDE to consider.

Attendees were told that all submitted questions and suggestions would be taken back to PDE headquarters for investigation and response. PDE has revised and added to the Chapter 49 *Frequently Asked Questions* document found at the following URL:  
<http://www.teaching.state.pa.us/teaching/site/default.asp?g=0> .

In response to suggestions and comments, PDE has also initiated:

- a plan for regular communications updates to the institutions,
- a plan for technical assistance to institutions over the next twelve months.
- A new version of the program application form incorporating feedback from the conference attendees,
- An online application form to be released on or around December 1, 2008
- Work groups to assist PDE in developing guidance for new Accelerated Programs, Post-Baccalaureate, and Intern certification programs that comply with the regulations.

In summary, the two conferences were extremely useful in bringing together the concerns and valuable suggestions of the dedicated professionals who serve the Commonwealth by preparing its teaching force.

Numerous representatives at the conferences shared stories of activities and strategies that have enabled them and their colleagues to make progress toward the new certificate programs in Ch.49. Successful strategies include:

- Collaboration - Indeed, collaboration has turned out to be one of the “buzz words” around this effort.
- Curriculum mapping - It is evident that institutions who began a process of dialogue and curriculum-mapping months ago have made great progress.
- Focus on required competencies – A most successful strategy is mapping “if” and “where” those competencies currently exist in their programs, allowing planners to determine their next steps. By adjusting current course offerings, institutions have discovered they have fewer new courses to develop.
- Matrix - many institutions have discovered the usefulness of a matrix that not only checks items off, but which can also be extended to show types and timing of assessments as well as embedded field experiences. Through careful planning and sequencing of the required competencies, field experiences, and assessments, these institutions are standardizing courses in ways that will benefit adjunct instructors and larger departments.

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- Partnerships - several institutions have found ways to partner with colleagues in the Arts and Sciences. The emphasis on content in the 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade certificate has made collaboration with Arts and Sciences faculty valuable to both partners.

In general, cooperation among faculty groups is helping make the task of program design possible. The challenges in meeting the requirements of Chapter 49 have helped a number of institutions bring new emphasis to their Education department's role, not only in serving the Commonwealth by nurturing future generations of teachers, but also in generating revenues for their institutions. One college described its success in getting each department to give up one course requirement in order to allow the middle level certificate students to take a methods course in each of the core subject areas. No small feat, but one that was possible due to ongoing and persuasive communications pointing to the positive impacts of Chapter 49 on the campus as a whole.

#### Technical Assistance

In recognition of the challenges facing institutions in regard to Ch. 49, PDE is developing various technical assistance offerings. These activities and tools are now in the developmental stage, but likely will include regional sites and subject matter expert trainers. Topics range from ELL to models of quality online courses; from formative assessment to specific assistance with preparing applications for approval. It is PDE's intent, with the assistance of higher education professionals, to present evidence-based and practical advice that assists faculty in developing more critical background knowledge on the emphasized competencies and professional development in instructional design.

We are developing a website that will house all Chapter 49 information in one place. We will be adding a regularly scheduled newsletter for updates and a calendar of events so that information is available to all. We will be announcing this to all forum participants shortly.

#### Extension & deadlines

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has created a procedure for institutions to apply for and receive official six month extensions, which allow the institution to continue existing certification programs for an additional time period not to go beyond August 31, 2013. The extension is related to perceived teacher shortages in the state caused by the transition from existing certificates to the new certificates. A benefit of the extension is for students who need an extra semester or so to complete their coursework

A second benefit of the extension is for institutions to have more time to develop their new certificate programs and submit their Initial Program Applications. With an extension, institutions have until January 1, 2010 to submit their applications, and until fall of 2010 to begin the programs on campus. Institutions who do not apply for an extension must adhere to the existing timeline for new programs.

It is possible and likely that institutions may apply for and receive an extension and still choose to submit their new programs approved in time for a fall 2009 startup. If this occurs, institutions may continue to allow existing program students to complete their programs until August of 2013, but will be unable to admit new students to existing programs. New students would be

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admitted to new certificate programs only and could earn those new certificates beginning January 1, 2013.

A graphic timeline has been added to the FAQ document. If you have questions about timelines after viewing the graphic and reading related documents, please contact your liaison.

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