

## How to Get and Keep Quality

**An Interview** \_\_\_\_\_ as excerpted from *Communication Briefings*  
Wilma Mathews, Manager of Public Relations field support for AT&T Network Systems *Volume 8, No. 2*

Wilma Mathews likes to cut through all the technical language about quality in the workplace when trying to describe it. "You get quality," says Mathews, "by assuming the responsibility and authority for making sure the job gets done right the first time."

"In the old days, quality was judged by the number of widgets that were defective out of every 100 produced," she explains. "Most businesses can't afford that luxury anymore. In service businesses generally, and public relations in particular, we may be working on a single product that, when finished, will go out to 200,000 people or more. We can't wait until the end of the line to have someone tell us it won't work."

**We have to focus on quality throughout the entire process - and not just on the end result.**

*One Problem:* People don't ask customers, clients and bosses what their definition of quality is. "Quality to one person might be getting out six different news releases during the year," she says. "But quality to the boss might mean getting a single story on the front page of a certain trade journal. You'd better find out what the various quality expectations are before launching a project."

Mathews indicates that spending the time needed in the beginning to make sure a project ends up working the way you want it is vital. "The best example a ... department can set is to show that it isn't afraid to measure itself," she says.



## "MEASURING UP" DEEMED IMPORTANT

In preparing our recent application for continued recognition for the Council on Post-secondary Accreditation (COPA), the Council was required to document that our standards and practices are accepted by the profession. Therefore, we collected letters of support from institutional presidents, deans, chairs, program leaders, and practitioners. The following quotes are representative of the feelings expressed by these professionals regarding the benefits associated with CACREP accreditation.

### PROGRAM QUALITY...

"It is organizations such as yours that help us assure our faculty, students, graduates, and employers that our programs are current and of the highest quality. - K.M.S.

As an overall result, the accreditation [process] helped us move from a "collection of courses" to a full program in each of our selected areas. This has given us more credibility with our college administration and with our colleagues in other academic areas. - D.A.H.

We have found the accreditation process to be significant in providing relevant guidelines for the growth and improvement of the counselor preparation programs. - A.J.S.

The counseling field has become complex requiring specialized training models, careful and continual review, and revisions by a specialized professional council. CACREP has promoted more effective evaluation and analysis of outcomes of counselor training programs. - A.E.U.

### GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT...

... our faculty certainly felt that the evaluation process for accreditation by CACREP constituted an extremely rewarding and growth-producing experience. - C.G.S.

I believe I can speak with confidence that the faculty has never questioned the giving of their energy and time, as well as the value of the accreditation process. - N.A.V.

The self-study process gave our faculty a focus for discussion and a vehicle for planned, systematic change. It enabled us to address some difficult issues that were controversial among our faculty and, in doing so, forced us to become clearer in our intentions. And the process certainly helped us know our entire program more fully than ever before. - D.A.H.

... I know that the self-study process itself is a valuable exercise for a training facility. I also know that "measuring up" to a standard of excellence is a point of personal importance for all faculty and administrative persons involved. -L.R.

### STUDENTS, FACULTY ...

Students, particularly those from outside our region, often note accreditation as one reason they made initial contact with our program. Likewise, during faculty searches, many candidates indicate they want to be affiliated with an accredited program. - R.H.P.

... the faculty acknowledges that the quality of our applicants has increased since the program was first accredited. - N.V.

... graduates from the Community Agency Counseling program report that ... they are afforded more professional recognition as they begin their counseling careers. - R.E.C.

We moved from 34 to 48 hours and made corresponding changes in our course requirements. We certainly were concerned about increased hours and the potential negative impact that might have, but our fears were unfounded. We have experienced increased enrollments in all three approved programs. - D.C.W.



## ACCREDITATION AND THE QUALITY PROCESS

The second annual National Educational Quality Initiative (NEQI) conference was held July 25-28, 1989, in Washington, D.C. This year's conference was cosponsored by NCATE and COPA as it focused on quality and the Quality Sciences as applied to education.

### QUALITY...

Turn on your radio or TV, open a magazine or newspaper. It seems like every other word used in advertisements today includes this elusive word.

Ford claims that "Quality is Job One."

Zenith states that "The quality goes in before the name goes on."

Americans are undergoing a barrage aimed at convincing us that "Made in the USA" means superior quality. Amid the public hoopla and efforts by the various companies to sell "quality," the real definition of the word seems lost among the commercials and hype.

To this end, participants in the recent conference engaged in a ramble through the definition maze surrounding the word quality. Such as:

"You can't define it, but you know it when you see it."

"It's the result of a process requiring commitment to the total program."

"It's the extent a product meets the customer's requirements and use."

Ted Manning, COPA President, linked accreditation to the quality process through his definition of quality as "the measure of the achievement of purpose.s" The accreditation process begins by evaluating the purposes of the institution or program and how well they are achieved. Ultimately, the accrediting body makes a prospective judgment as to whether these purposes will continue to be achieved in a satisfactory manner.

"Quality is never high enough," says Dr. Manning. The institution or program should be constantly striving to exceed the minimums.

American industry has been in the business of quality control for years. Numerous management application theories have been developed which have recently gained the attention of the education community. Just as the assurance of quality has become a byword in American business, education circles have begun to realize that it is also a means for survival for today's educational systems. Quality becomes a competitive issue.

"Right now there is a tremendous void in the American educational system; no one talks about Quality. There is a quality crisis in this country.... And academia is slow to respond." (Patrick Townsend, 1989)

Accrediting agencies are in a position to formulate evaluative criteria which not only provide guidance for the development of quality programs, but also promote continuous evaluation and innovation. Thus quality is assured through the process of self-evaluation and improvement. As the business world has learned, maintaining quality is, in reality, cost efficient.

As budgets get tighter, more states will be reviewing colleges' offerings. Many states have implemented reviews which are not only directed at enrollment figures, but also study the quality of the offerings. What programs do to assure quality educational experiences may ultimately prove to be a matter of survival. With limited state funding, the financial pie continues to get cut into smaller and smaller pieces.

One recent movement in education urges the development of additional outcomes assessments. Mary Ann Lawlor, former Chair of the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools (AICS), warned that outcomes assess-  
continued on page 4



## CAS PUBLISHES SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDES

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The *CAS Self-Assessment Guides* were designed to augment the *CAS Standards and Guidelines for Student Services/Development Programs* in an effort to assist student affairs professionals in conducting evaluations for program development and assessment, institutional effectiveness, strategies planning, accreditation self-studies, or other purposes.

Each *Guide* includes criterion measures to assess the CAS Standards along with space and recommendations for identifying documentation, compliance status, and follow-up plans. The *Guide* also includes copies of the specific CAS Standards developed for the function area and a set of the general standards. Counselor Educators should note that the current CACREP Standards for Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education closely model the general CAS Standards. Therefore, the guidelines may prove helpful in conducting the self-study for CACREP accreditation.

For more information and pricing, contact: **CAS, Office of Student Affairs, 2108 North Administration Building, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.**

### THE QUICK CONNECTION

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continued from page 3...

ment can degenerate until only the end result matters. Such assessment serves only to weed out those students who are not capable. This is comparable to only finding the defective products in an assembly line. Evaluations for quality programming should be progressive. As the students progress through the program, periodic assessments should be made to determine not only the student's abilities, but also knowledge and skills gained. By implementing ongoing evaluations, programs can document quality and implement changes as necessary. Students should not become an end product only. As Lawlor stated, "education should produce better individuals, not just better economic providers."

Members of the recent AICS Quality Symposium formulated the following set of benchmarks for a quality education:

"Quality... education is the delivery to students of appropriate knowledge, attitudes, and skills congruent with the stated mission of the [program or] institution. It is characterized by job placement which results from consistently meeting student expectations and employer needs. Placed graduates perform in an identifiable, testable, measurable, and reliable manner at entry level. Quality ... education exists when all participants are proud of what they do without

ever having to be defensive about the school, faculty, students, or programs. It takes because of effective leadership, qualified faculty, effective instruction, appropriate facilities, equipment, and instructional resources combining to provide an environment conducive to learning.

Let us know how you think CACREP can be instrumental in helping programs provide quality education. Contact the office.

### **Selected Bibliography**

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Deming, W. Edwards, Out of the Crisis, Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1986.

Juran, J.M., Juran on Planning for Quality, New York: Free Press (division of Macmillan, Inc.), 1988.

Spanbauer, Stanley, Quality First in Education ... Why Not?, Appleton, WI: Fox Valley Technical College Foundation, 1985.

Townsend, Patrick, Commit to Quality, New York: Wiley Press, 1986.

US Army, Manual for Leadership, FM6-22.

## **WORK BEHAVIOR STATEMENTS SOUGHT**

The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) is currently compiling a set of work behaviors in which professional counselors typically engage. The data will be utilized in the development of a comprehensive description of the work of practicing professional counselors.

Work behavior statements should include both direct service and other activities such as group counseling, research, assessment, workshop attendance, supervision, etc. Those interested in providing this information should monitor and note their daily activities over a week or two. Statements should include the nature, purpose, clientele, and setting of the activity.

Forward statements to LARRY LOESCH, University of Florida, 1215 Norman Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611.

### **The Quick Connection**

Published as an intermediate update for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA).

Comments should be directed to the following:  
Gayla S. Keesee, Managing Editor  
Carol L. Bobby, Exec. Director



## COUNCIL NOTES...

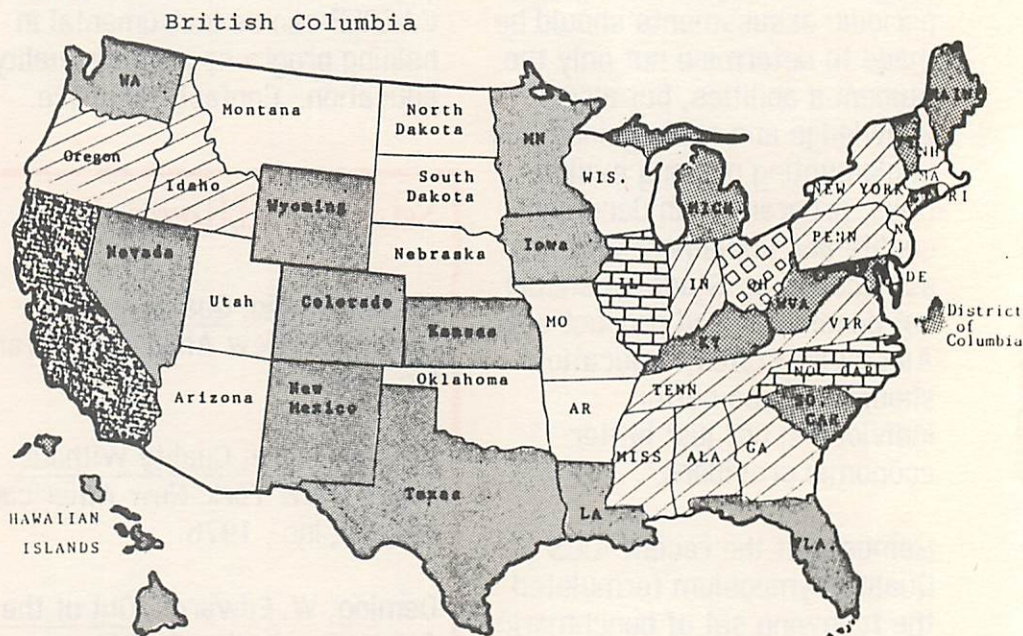
THE COUNCIL RECENTLY VOTED TO INSTITUTE A SET FEE FOR ACCREDITATION SITE VISITS. PROGRAMS WILL NOW BE BILLED \$3,000 FOR HOSTING THREE (3) MEMBERS AND \$4,000 FOR FOUR (4) MEMBER TEAMS.

PAYMENT FOR ON-SITE EXPENSES SHOULD BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE VISIT. INSTITUTIONS WILL NO LONGER REIMBURSE CACREP FOR EXPENSES INCURRED.

TEAM MEMBERS MAY REQUEST AN ADVANCE TO COVER EXPENSES SIMPLY BY CONTACTING THE CACREP OFFICE. SUCH REQUESTS SHOULD BE RECEIVED NO LESS THAN TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE VISIT.

## DID YOU KNOW...

that CACREP has accredited programs in 36 states and the British of Columbia? Currently 57 institutions have one or more programs accredited by CACREP. The Council will be reviewing an additional six new academic units this Fall, which would bring the total over 60 for 1989.



The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation periodically reviews procedures and practices of its member accrediting bodies. Accrediting bodies seeking continued recognition are scheduled for review January 8-10, 1990, in Washington, D.C. Deadline for receipt of third party comment or request to present oral testimony is November 10, 1989. Comments must be addressed specifically to an applicant's compliance with COPA's *Provisions for Recognition*, which may be obtained from the COPA office. The application and materials submitted by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) shall be available for public review in the COPA office until December 8, 1989.

Third party comment or request for appointment should be forwarded to the attention of Dr. Gloria Chernay, COPA, One Dupont Circle, Suite 305, Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 452-1433.

## MAKE THE QUALITY CONNECTION WITH CACREP

Copies of the July, 1988, Accreditation Procedures Manual and Application can be obtained from the CACREP office for \$10.00 per copy. Write: CACREP, 5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304 or call 703/823-9800 ext. 301.