



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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February 2, 2011

Mr. Brian Kelly, Editor
U.S. News & World Report
1050 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Mr. Kelly:

I write in response to your letter of January 19, 2011, in which you announce a review of the nation's education schools that *U.S. News & World Report* will conduct in partnership with the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ). Your letter also asks The University of Texas at Austin to complete an on-line survey to prepare for participation in the review. The influence your publication's college rankings have acquired rests on the quality of the data assembled and the fairness of the ratings criteria and weightings. Last year we examined in detail the criteria and the quality of the data used by NCTQ for its ratings of teacher preparation programs. We disagreed with their methods so strongly that we issued an open protest. Because you have chosen to use the NCTQ model, we decline to participate in either the survey or the review you are now conducting.


In January 2010, the deans of education, natural sciences, liberal arts, and engineering at our university wrote a letter to Ms. Kate Walsh, President of the National Council on Teacher Quality, expressing concerns about the methodology used by her organization. The enclosed copy of that letter provides details about those concerns.

The University of Texas at Austin has a strong commitment to teacher preparation that involves faculty, staff, and students from engineering, fine arts, liberal arts, and natural sciences, in addition to education. We are proud of our innovative and effective programs, which include many non-traditional features and which are based on solid research on teaching, learning, and teacher preparation. We do not believe the review *U.S. News & World Report* is conducting in partnership with NCTQ recognizes the best practices and, in particular the best new practices, in teacher preparation.

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We will be sharing our position with the leadership of other institutions around the country. If the published results of the *U.S. News & World Report* study include any mention of our institution, it should include the statement "The University of Texas at Austin declined to participate in this review."

Sincerely,



William Powers, Jr.
President

WP/cs

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Steven W. Leslie, Executive Vice President and Provost
Dr. Douglas J. Dempster, Dean, College of Fine Arts
Dr. Randy L. Diehl, Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Dr. Gregory L. Fenves, Dean, Cockrell School of Engineering
Dr. Manuel J. Justiz, Dean, College of Education
Dr. Mary A. Rankin, Dean, College of Natural Sciences



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

DAVID E. DANIEL

February 14, 2011

Mr. Brian Kelly, Editor
U.S. News & World Report
1050 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

Dear Mr. Kelly:

I am responding to your letter of January 19, 2011, which announces a review of the nation's schools of education involving a partnership of your organization and the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ). Your letter requested that The University of Texas At Dallas complete an on-line survey as a part of its participation in the review.

Last year, we examined the criteria and quality of the data used by NCTQ for ratings of teacher preparation programs. We disagree with their methods. Because you have chosen to use the NCTQ model, we decline to participate in this survey and in the review you are conducting.

The influence your publication's rankings have acquired is a result of the quality of the data you have assembled and the fairness of the ratings' criteria and weights. We do not believe the methodology used by NCTQ meets the standards your organization has previously established for its work.

The University of Texas at Dallas takes a nontraditional approach to teacher education. We believe the best-qualified teachers are prepared in their disciplines foremost, and that classroom experience for aspiring teachers needs to begin as early as the first year of college, via hands-on training and experience, as provided by the UTeach Dallas program. We believe the proposed review, conducted in partnership with NCTQ, will inadequately assess best current practices in teacher preparation, and may completely ignore or discount best new practices.

If published results of the *U.S. News & World Report* study mention UT Dallas, they should also include the statement "The University of Texas at Dallas declined to participate in this review."

Sincerely,

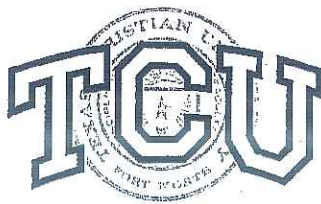
A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. E. Daniel".

David E. Daniel
President

cc: Dr. George Fair, Dean of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies
Dr. Scherry Johnson, Director of Teacher Education
Dr. Homer Montgomery, Co-Director, UTeach Dallas
Dr. Mary L. Urquhart, Co-Director, UTeach Dallas
Dr. Hobson Wildenthal, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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The University of Texas at Dallas is an equal opportunity/affirmative action university.



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

March 10, 2011

Mr. Brian Kelly, Editor
U.S. News & World Report
1050 Thomas Jefferson St NW
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Mr. Kelly:

TCU and the College of Education are committed to meeting the need for highly effective teachers for the school children of Texas and the Nation. All of our Early Childhood/Elementary, Middle and Secondary Education majors are prepared to meet the challenges of today's schools. They are grounded in theory and evidence-based practices, have strong core content requirements, and have teaching experiences every semester in diverse, field-based school and community settings. We have embraced accountability standards and are accredited by three professional organizations. As a result, we carefully considered your invitation to participate in the *U.S. News & World Report/NCTQ* project to review the nation's schools of education. We have discussed the benefits and detriments associated with our participation and have agreed that we will not participate in the survey or the review. Our reasons echo the concerns raised by leaders in colleges and universities across the Nation:

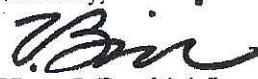
- NCTQ standards and methodology are neither clear, nor aligned with any other educational professional organization standards, and are incongruent with current standards for social science research
- It appears NCTQ is conducting the project with results already in mind, i.e. "We all know that Colleges of Education are broken" (Kate Walsh)
- NCTQ does not respect or protect the institutional rights of universities that participate, choose not to participate, or choose to withdraw. This policy contradicts the Institutional Review Board standards that we, as faculty and as an institution, embrace.
- Our prior experience with NCTQ, and that of our colleagues in other states leads us to conclude that NCTQ is not committed to a transparent and accurate rating of our program.


The National Council on Teacher Quality has already applied their questionable methodology to rank the TCU College of Education as "Attention Needed." There appears to be no significant change in the methods for acquiring data to suggest the NCTQ will change this inaccurate report. For example, NCTQ ranked our elementary reading program as "fails to meet standard," yet we are one of only six universities in the Nation to be recognized with the *Certificate of Distinction* by the International Reading Association in 2009.

In addition, the Texas Education Agency conducted a site visit in 2009 and reviewed all COE undergraduate programs that involve initial teacher certification (EC-6, 4-8, 8-12, and EC-12 certification levels). TEA commended the COE in many areas, such as its admission procedures, thorough syllabi, extensive field/lab experiences both locally and abroad, and student teaching supervision.

If the published results of *U.S. News & World Report* project include any mention of TCU, it should include the statement: "Texas Christian University declined to participate in this review."

Sincerely,


Victor J. Boschini, Jr.
Chancellor


R. Nowell Donovan
Provost/VC for Academic Affairs


Mary Martin Patton
Dean, College of Education



VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

February 4, 2011

Brian Kelly, Editor
U.S. News & World Report
1050 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Mr. Kelly:

I am writing today in response to your January 19, 2011 correspondence and email follow-up by Arthur McKee to Dr. Bill Ellis, President and Dr. Michael Rosato, Dean of the School Education, requesting Howard Payne University to participate in a national study of teacher preparation programs. You indicated that *U. S. News* will be "...partnering with the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ)" to conduct the study. While the University embraces meaningful and relevant accountability as is demonstrated by its compliance with the standards of Texas Education Agency (TEA) for teacher certification, in addition to compliance with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS/COC), the University continues to have serious concerns regarding the methodology and use of data in the NCTQ study.

The press release announcing the *U.S. News & World Report*/NCTQ national study indicates that the NCTQ will utilize similar methods as those used in their 2009 Texas study. This is extremely unfortunate. In the 2009 Texas study, NCTQ did not follow accepted research protocol. For example, NCTQ failed to follow ethical guidelines regarding informed consent. Universities declining to participate in the study were still included. NCTQ also employed standards that have not been vetted by teacher education professionals who thoroughly understand the requirements established by each state. Finally, data collection was limited strictly to static inputs, excluding factors linked by actual research to produce effective teachers such as the quality and length of field experiences. A comprehensive review of teacher preparation programs would include such factors.

Howard Payne University strongly disagrees with the establish criteria and intended data methods of the NCTQ study and asserts that the study does not recognize the best practices in teacher preparation. As was the case in the earlier Texas study, Howard Payne University

Brian Kelly, Editor

February 4, 2011

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declines to participate in both the study and the survey. It is our intention to make the University's position known to the appropriate state oversight agencies, as well as other institutions within Baptist higher education. Furthermore, should the *U.S. News & World Report* study include any mention of the University, your reference should include the disclaimer that Howard Payne University declined to participate in the NCTQ review.

Sincerely,



W. Mark Tew, Th.D.

Provost

Howard Payne University

CC:

Dr. Bill Ellis, President, Howard Payne University

Dr. Michael Rosato, Dean, School of Education, Howard Payne University

Robert Scott, Commissioner, Texas Education Agency

Dr. John Miazga, President, Texas Association of Colleges of Teacher Education

Dr. Sharon P. Robinson, President, American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education

Dr. Carol McDonald, President, Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas

Dr. Raymund A. Paredes, Commissioner, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Dr. Arthur McKee, National Council on Teacher Quality