March 12, 2012

University of Cincinnati
College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services
Office of the Dean
P. O. Box 210002
Cincinnati, OH 45220

Dear Dean Johnson,

During the meeting of the Committee on Transformation Initiatives on February 17, 2012, the Transformation Initiative Proposal from the University of Cincinnati was reviewed. The committee was very impressed with your proposal to reform teacher education in the action areas of candidate differentiation of instruction to meet student needs, evidence-based instruction, detailed feedback, curriculum revision, field and clinical experiences in high needs school, and TPA implementation. The goals of the USD Transformation Initiative align directly with the goals of NCATE’s Blue Ribbon Panel report, *Transforming Teacher Education through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers*. We are pleased that the University of Cincinnati is taking action to transform teacher education and inform the field.

As you know, one of the goals of NCATE’s Transformation Initiative (TI) option is to provide research on teacher education and elements of teacher education programs that lead to the preparation of effective teachers who help students learn. Your initiative on *Transforming Urban Educator Preparation* is destined to provide much needed research about the breadth and depth of reform in which teacher preparation providers need to engage. Collecting and analyzing data in all of the areas listed above should provide helpful insights into the importance of systemic initiatives.

The proposal for the transformation initiative clearly describes the *Transforming Urban Educator Preparation* project and the timelines for implementation. However, the Committee raised some questions for you to consider as you implement the proposed initiative:

1. Consider reframing the proposal’s perspective on urban educator preparation to present and provide evidence of the positive opportunities of urban educator preparation to broaden and balance the challenges cited. For example, how does the work of Darling-Hammond or Haberman fit or influence what you have proposed?
2. Expand and define the theoretical perspective from which you will refine the ongoing initiative so that the themes are more closely integrated and provide the coherence that will drive teacher candidates’ development.
3. In addition to the research questions and activities on pages 5-7, consider reorganizing or supplementing the outcomes into or as goal statements. At present there is a need for more clarity about how you will know when or if the initiative is successful.
4. Can you provide further description of the signature assessments by defining them, or providing examples?
5. There is some concern that the data collection strategies described do not fit together as a research design. You may want to think more deeply about how the theoretical framework, research questions and methodology will “hang together” to provide a coherent vision for systemic reform of urban educator preparation.

As you refine your research and evaluation plan, please consider these questions and comments, particularly in light of publication and dissemination to the field itself.

During the TI visit to the University of Cincinnati, the Board of Examiners team will provide feedback to the institution on its progress at this point of the project. Senior Vice President Deb Eldridge will serve as an observer on the team to provide assistance related to the procedures in and documents for a TI visit. Institutions that host TI visits will submit annual reports of their progress on implementing the TI. These annual reports should be submitted by April 20th throughout the duration of the initiative a part of the regular Part C: Annual Report process.

We have begun to create a community of TI institutions through the creation of an online forum to exchange ideas, proposals, and progress. Please submit an electronic copy of the Executive Summary of the initiative that we can place in the TI forum for TI institutions to be launched in the next two weeks. The Executive Summary should be 1-3 pages in length.

We look forward to working with you and the faculty, administrators and collaborative partners at the University of Cincinnati as you pilot test the new Transformation Initiative option for NCATE.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]
Deborah Eldridge
Senior Vice President

Cc: James G. Cibulka