

Professional Lives of Teacher Educators in an Era of Mandated Reform

By Steve Turley

This article addresses the topic of professional lives of teacher educators in an era of mandated reform from the perspective of a teacher educator at a large, comprehensive urban institution in California. Successively as director of student teaching for the elementary education program, coordinator for the secondary teacher preparation program, and associate dean, it has been a challenging part of my professional life over the previous nine years to participate with and lead faculty through several major mandates: a state class-size reduction initiative for grades K-3, a mandate from the California State University system to increase the number of teacher candidates by 25 percent, concurrent national and state reviews of the college of education, and a complete overhaul of the elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs to meet new state credentialing standards. These mandates overlapped in purposes and chronology and, along with other initiatives and projects, served to keep the teacher education faculty in a perpetual state of reform, renewal and program development activity.

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My purpose in this article is to reflect on the conditions teacher educators labor under as they go about their professional lives in the overheated climate of mandated education reform of recent years, particularly when the mandates are multiple, have strict timelines, and carry high-stakes consequences.

Professional Lives of Teacher Educators

The article focuses on faculty participation from a time and workload perspective, since it is the intersection of time, workload and mandate that affects the intensity and quality of the effort to implement current mandates and also affects faculty willingness to engage in reform efforts called for in future mandates. I draw on personal experience, on observations of colleagues at my own institution, and on what I have learned from colleagues at other institutions whom I meet at professional gatherings. The first section of the article develops a profile of the professional life of teacher education faculty. Then I discuss some of the key points of intersection of the professional lives of teacher educators and mandated education reform. Lastly, I look at some of the implications of mandated reform for policymakers and faculty and administrators in institutions of higher education (IHEs).

Professional Lives of Teacher Education Faculty

Faculty become teacher educators for an assortment of reasons. In *The Lives of Teacher Educators*, Ducharme (1993) summarized the motivation for leaving K-12 teaching among the 34 teacher educators he interviewed: “They left public school teaching because of isolation, low autonomy, poor intellectual climate, fear of becoming boring to students, and lack of personal time” (p. 52). These are, on the surface, all negative reasons. However, each has a positive mirror image that attracts faculty into higher education: working with adults, academic and administrative freedom, a stimulating intellectual environment, and greater control over one’s time.

Most teacher educators have a love of teaching that led them into K-12 teaching initially that continues in higher education, where their desire to teach is transferred to working with adult students. Many are highly motivated to do quality scholarship that cannot be accomplished as a K-12 teacher, even if they have the necessary training in research. Most also hope to have a broader impact on schools through their work with future teachers (Ducharme, 1993). Teacher Educators are not dissimilar from their colleagues across campus in their desire to teach, love of learning, hope for greater professional autonomy, and need for intellectual freedom (Sanderson, Phua, & Huerda, 2000).

Faculty work is traditionally demarcated in three areas: teaching, scholarship, and service (Boyer, 1990). At my institution, faculty are accountable for the equivalent of 12 teaching units each semester (four 3-unit courses); they are expected to engage in scholarly activity that leads to professional presentations and publications; and they are expected to devote some portion of their time to service to the university, the profession and, for teacher educators, to the education community. The assumption is that accounting for 12 units of teaching, plus an indeterminate amount of time and product relating to scholarship and an additional indeterminate amount of time devoted to the different levels of service, equates to a full-time job outside academia.

That is, while teaching four courses per semester (including class preparation,

reading and responding to student work, advising, office hours, etc.) and serving on department, college, and university committees, faculty are also expected to do their research and writing and give service to some part of the professional and education communities. It can be a daunting workload even without external forces begging for time. For beginning faculty in particular it can be quite burdensome.

In their study of *Promotion and Tenure: Community and Socialization in Academe*, Tierney and Bensimon (1996) reject the myth that IHE faculty “work short hours and occupy their time with globe-trotting to conferences and lingering over leisurely lunches at the faculty club” (p. 59). Examples drawn from their interview data indicate that faculty work six and seven days a week, and during summer recesses. They report that “faculty in business, engineering or the sciences who had been in industry or business previously... said they worked harder in and spent longer hours in their academic positions” (p. 61).

Layzell (1996) reported that the typical faculty work week ranged from 47 hours (two-year institutions) to 57 hours (research universities). In the 1999 National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004), faculty reported spending about 18 percent of their time on administrative tasks, 21 percent on research, and 59 percent on teaching-related activities. In contrast to their perceived actual work, they reported they *would like to spend* about 14 percent of their time on administrative tasks, 25 percent on research, and 56 percent on teaching (see Table 1). Although there are not great differences between actual and desired amounts of time faculty devote to the three areas of their working lives, it would appear that they feel that administrative and teaching responsibilities impinge on their research time and that they would like to reduce administrative tasks more than teaching activities to reallocate time toward research.

It should be kept in mind that faculty allocation of time to the three areas varies with type of institution. For example, faculty at research institutions spend more time on research activities and less on teaching than do their colleagues at comprehensive universities and liberal arts colleges (Menges & Austin, 2001). Teacher education faculty are more prevalent at the latter two types of institutions.

Table 1
Percentage of Faculty Time Allocated to 3 Areas: Teaching, Scholarship, Service

	Teaching		Scholarship		Service	
	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred
All Faculty ¹	59	56	21	25	18	14
Teacher Education Faculty ²	65	57	16	25	18	18

¹ Data derived from National Center for Education Statistics, 2004

² Data derived from RATE V, 1991

Professional Lives of Teacher Educators

This is certainly the case in California, where about 60 percent of new teachers are prepared in the California State University (CSU) system, 30 percent in the private institutions, and 10 percent in the University of California (UC) system.

Teacher education faculty reported that they spend about 48 hours per week on professional activities (RATE V, 1991). Approximately 65 percent of their time is spent on teaching-related activities, about 16 percent on research, and about 18 percent on service. They *would like to spend* about 57 percent of their time on teaching, 25 percent on research, and 18 percent on service (see Table 1). As Table 1 shows, teacher educators spend slightly more of their time teaching than their colleagues across campus, less time in scholarly activities, and the same amount of time in service. However, they would like to allocate their professional time in the same way as their peers across campus, with slightly more time devoted to service.

Teacher educators do not appear to be satisfied with the demands on their time. Howey (1994) found that “the majority of teacher education faculty... report both a dissatisfaction with their workload (56%) and a lack of time and support for scholarship (53%)” (p.27). Howey (1994) attributed this dissatisfaction in part to the increasing weight given to scholarship in the retention and promotion process, even in IHEs not traditionally research oriented. Howey, Arends, Galluzo, Yarger and Zimpher (1995) reported on how faculty perceived change in their use of time to fulfill responsibilities over a five year period. On 10 items surveyed, faculty reported most frequently that there was no change. However, over 60 percent reported that they spent more time on design and development of teacher preparation programs and related governance and administration than they had 5 years earlier. Howey et al. (1995) concluded that “the trend . . . (was to) a greater commitment of time to their responsibilities (to) teacher education program development and related P-12 activities” (p. 10). As I discuss in this paper, policies that mandate program change lead to heavy and unequal demands on faculty time.

Hawley (1990) observes that teacher education is closely controlled by state policy mandates in ways other university disciplines and programs rarely are, concluding that “teacher education is probably the most highly regulated course of study in colleges and universities” (p. 137). Teacher education faculty have learned that when external mandates arrive, they generally do not bring chunks of free time or reduced faculty responsibilities commensurate with their demands. This is not to say that faculty workload adjustments cannot be made. Deans and chairs use all the ingenuity at their command to free up faculty for participation in extra-normal activities such as those associated with external mandates. But sufficient funds are not always available in the best of times, and in tight budget climates they are even more constrained.

Looming over any discussion of faculty workload are the institution-specific retention, tenure and promotion (RTP) policies that hold faculty accountable for their professional lives. The way in which local RTP policies reward (or punish or ignore) faculty work on program revision that lies outside the traditional boundaries

of teaching, scholarship and service can affect faculty eagerness to work on mandated projects. This is a complex issue that this paper will not delve into. It has been addressed by others, notably Boyer (1987, 1990), Tierney and Bensimon (1996), and Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997). Suffice it to say that time spent on program renewal that is above and beyond the institution's stipulated unit load, as well as outside the local definitions of scholarship and service, is time not spent in the three areas of teaching, scholarship and service that are crucial to faculty advancement. Teacher education faculty who do not consciously explore the relationship between their work on external mandates and their institution's RTP policy put themselves at risk. This is especially true of junior faculty.

A recent letter to the editor of the California State University (CSU) system online journal *Exchanges* (Feeling the Time Pressure, n.d.), asked for advice from veteran faculty about balancing the demands on the time of new faculty:

I accepted a position in the CSU because its primary mission is to provide quality teaching and learning environments, but I'm having a hard time balancing all the conflicting pressures to try new pedagogies, use service learning, use technology, sit on committees, participate in outcomes assessment efforts, contribute to teacher education (even though I'm not a teacher ed faculty member), and do sufficient research to satisfy RTP and merit pay committees. In addition, my biological clock is ticking and I'd really like to start a family in the next couple of years. I'd love to hear from some faculty who have been especially successful balancing conflicting demands. How do they do it?

The extent and weight of faculty workload captured in this new professor's lament may not mirror all faculty, nor even all beginning faculty, but my experience would indicate that it does represent the professional lives for a sizable number. It is noteworthy in the context of this paper that the young professor devotes some portion of time to teacher education, even though she is not a teacher educator per se. In contrast, Castle and Schutz (2002) reported that senior faculty feel more relaxed about their working lives. They do not necessarily work any less hard than they did previously, but the added stress of worrying about tenure and promotion is behind them.

Teacher education faculty choose their professional lives. They generally come out of K-12 teaching with clear reasons for relocating their teaching careers in higher education. Their workload appears to be similar to that of their campus peers and is similarly greater in hours and responsibilities than the public is aware of. Hidden among the statistics may be an unequal distribution of workload responsibilities between teacher educators and their disciplinary colleagues as well as within the teacher education faculty. That is, because teacher education is heavily regulated through state policy mandates, teacher educators have additional workload responsibilities that their peers do not have, and within teacher education faculties some faculty carry additional responsibilities to respond to policy mandates that their colleagues escape.

The Intersection of Faculty Professional Lives and Mandated Reform

Mandates intersect the professional lives of faculty in at least three closely related ways. They affect curriculum development, faculty collaboration, and time and workload.

To provide a context for a discussion of this intersection, I use the example of recent mandates affecting teacher preparation in California. Table 2 displays selected mandates from the period 1992 to 2002 that have deeply impacted how teacher education faculty carry out their professional lives at my institution. Although this is not an exhaustive list, it renders an idea of the number and types of mandates faculty are subject to at any given time. Responding to these national, state, university and accrediting agency imperatives is never a short-term, easily achieved matter. The dates attached to the legislative actions, for example, indicate when they began. Implementing a single mandate can require months and, in some cases, years of effort. Working within these mandates involves close monitoring of the state capital, since policy guidelines and requirements can change abruptly. Mandates from the university central office very often require curricular changes in one or more courses. It is also instructive to note that the dates attached to accreditation review mask the one to two year period of increasing preparation efforts leading up to the site visit and, in the case of NCATE, involve annual reporting between accreditation visits. Mandates usually have a long shelf life before they are superseded by the next generation of mandates.

Each mandate represents a nexus of activities of varying complexity. Some mandates involve greater numbers of faculty, for greater amounts of time, and require greater outlay of resources. Some are dispatched within a relatively short amount of time and become unobtrusive features of the professional landscape. Others become prominent features of the landscape that require constant attention. For example, activity following passage of the SB 2042 legislation in 1998 started slowly, gathered headway, and probably crested in 2002-03 as credential programs completed program revision and submitted documents for review. However, the sweeping intent of this mandate guarantees its place as an integral part of the professional lives of teacher educators for years to come.

Mandates Affect Course Curriculum

Mandates in teacher education nearly always have a curricular component. When the state or an accrediting organization or the university system central office mandates a change regarding the preparation of teachers, program courses have to change.

One important curricular impact of mandated reform is on course content. The elements embedded in each of the 19 Standards for Program Quality and Effective-

Table 2
Selected Mandates and Effects, 1992 - 2003

Year	Mandate Authorization	Effect
1992	SB 1422	Set in motion current round of state initiated reform in California by establishing advisory panel to review requirements for elementary and secondary teaching credentials
1996	SB 1777	Class-size reduction; credential programs adjust to accommodate high percentage of candidates teaching on emergency permits
1998	SB 2042	Moved SB 1422 recommendations to development stage; revised teacher preparation, subject matter preparation, induction, & professional development; established Teaching Performance Assessment
1999	AB 1059	Accelerated implementation of SB 2042 Standard 13 (Preparation to Teach English Learners)
2000 (Oct.)	CSU Chancellor's Executive Order 758	Required 45 hours of school-based fieldwork prior to program entry (up from 30) Required that all programs accept Subject Matter Competence from every CSU campus; no additional requirements can be added
2001 (April)	State Accreditation Review	Required accreditation through the Commission on Teacher Credentialing
2001 (April)	NCATE Review	Initial (voluntary) accreditation
2001 (Sept.)	SB 2042	Standards for Program Quality and Effectiveness finalized; programs begin revision
2001 (Sept.)	SB 57	Required programs to develop an Early Completion Internship Option; due 5/03
2001	ESEA Title II	Begin annual NCLB reporting in 2002
2002	SB 2042	New Subject Matter Program standards released; programs begin revision; due 8/04
2003 (Sept.)	SB 2042	Fifth Year Program Induction Program Standards disseminated; intent to submit a program document due 11/03

ness for teacher preparation mandated by SB 2042 ultimately became the content of courses in the credential program. Thus, through the Program Standards and accompanying compliance guaranteed by the accreditation process, the state is able to reach into IHE courses in a very direct way. If reviewers cannot determine how elements of program standards are addressed in course outlines and syllabi, they

Professional Lives of Teacher Educators

have the authority to require revision until those elements appear. This is an impact on IHE course development that undergraduate programs and most master's programs elsewhere in the university are not subject to. History faculty, for example, do not have a state agency, through guidelines and accreditation reviewers, directing the content of the menu of history course offerings. They do not have state legislators introducing bills each session that will affect department majors and courses.

A specific example of the curricular effect of a CSU system mandate involved a change in the number of fieldwork hours needed for entry into credential programs. In 2000, the CSU system decided that all prospective teacher preparation candidates should have 45 hours of fieldwork in schools prior to entering teacher education programs (Chancellor's Executive Order 758, see Table 2). All programs at each institution had to revise their admission requirements. For us, that meant first deciding how the 45 hours could be accomplished. We could expect candidates to do the hours on their own and submit some type of evidence with their program application; we could spread the hours out over several prerequisite courses; or we could include the hours in a single prerequisite course. We took the last approach.

However, a simple decision did not end our work. The course had to be revised to officially include the 45 hours as a requirement. Those who have done university curriculum development (at least in the CSU system which, I imagine, is not unlike other large state systems), will understand that one does not simply declare a curriculum change and then implement it. The CSU, like other IHEs, has a tradition of shared faculty governance in curricular matters. Widespread faculty participation and review at several levels are defining characteristics of IHE curriculum development. In our case, the process involved revising the standard course outline and then gaining the approval of the secondary education program curriculum committee, the College of Education curriculum committee, and the university-wide Teacher Preparation Committee before the new requirement could appear in the university catalog and thus take effect. From start to finish it took a full calendar year simply to change a fieldwork hours requirement in a single course. When we undertook program revision to meet the SB 2042 standards, we faced the same lengthy curriculum review process for the set of 11 courses comprising the program. We can lament the slow working of the university process for curriculum change—and we do; however, the process is in place and we face it each time we wish to change program features that are curricular in nature.

Mandates Encourage Faculty Collaboration

Faculty collaboration on program development often transcends departments and programs. Since content in teacher preparation draws on several disciplinary foundations, developing a credential program can require working with unfamiliar colleagues with different disciplinary backgrounds and different perspectives on all the issues. Collaboration therefore requires willingness and skill on the part of

faculty. Consensus on key issues about how best to prepare teachers has to be reached. Differences on course content as well as unit allocation to different courses have to be resolved.

A primary issue is faculty buy-in and agreement to collaborate to develop the program along a strict timeline. Faculty may have responsibility for a program course, but revising the course to incorporate new mandates is not necessarily a high priority; their own programs, departments, teaching, scholarship, and service may be their priorities. Program revision leaders spend a considerable amount of time coaxing faculty to get some of the necessary work done in order to meet pressing submission deadlines.

Mandates Impact Time and Workload

To be collaborative and inclusive of a breadth of stakeholders, program revision requires a multiplicity of meetings for different purposes, for different faculty, and involving different numbers of participants. Such meetings require preparation and follow-up. Ultimately, documents get drafted, reviewed, and rewritten. All of these activities take time and contribute to faculty workload. Faculty do not share these responsibilities equally. Those in official leadership roles tend to take on more responsibility. Those in quasi-leadership roles, and those who elect to become more deeply involved than their position would require, assume tasks in the project. Others participate at lower levels of intensity, but still give of their time and energy.

Program activities associated with mandated reform usually fall outside the parameters of normal faculty workload. Time must be found somewhere. Some faculty economize in the three areas of teaching, scholarship and service. Teaching is usually the last area sacrificed, but may be affected in subtle ways such as a reading list not being updated, or revision of a course put off, or slightly less attention given to assessing student work during a particularly busy term. Scholarly productivity may diminish as time is taken away from research and writing. Professional reading lessens; writing up collected data to submit for publication gets postponed. Committee work may fall off, either through simply serving on fewer committees or by attending less regularly. There may be lowered participation in faculty governance. Or, faculty try to keep up their typical pace and output in teaching, scholarship, and committee work, in which case they begin working longer hours and more days, often at the expense of their non-professional lives.

As the coordinator of our secondary teacher education program revision project, I often heard from faculty that they had conflicts and could not attend a workshop or review a document or continue to participate at a level they had earlier. Some faculty handed over participation to other faculty rather than give up something equally as important in their professional lives. This, of course, had implications for continuity of the project. As faculty withdraw, they take their

Professional Lives of Teacher Educators

history, expertise and experience with them and they are replaced by faculty who have to be brought up to speed with the project. The turnover of participating faculty can have an adverse impact on the project's timeline and can also contribute to an increase in workload for some of the remaining veterans.

Faculty at the CSU work, by contract, from the week prior to the beginning of the semester to the date final grades are due. During the winter, spring, and summer breaks they cannot be required to conduct IHE business. Typically, faculty take this time to revise courses, catch up on professional reading, and devote focused time to their scholarship. This is a time in which reform efforts can come to a halt. If there is no financial incentive for faculty to work on program development over the summer, for example, work can be suspended until the fall semester, thus slowing down overall progress on the effort. If there is a mandated deadline in the middle of summer, the project often has to be completed before the end of the spring semester in May. When faculty leave for the summer, whatever work remains falls disproportionately on administrators on year round contracts or on faculty who volunteer to continue working during this "off" time. When there are no faculty around, administrators essentially work in isolation.

Implications for Policymakers and IHEs

The current phase of reform in California is part of a set of policies dating back to the late 1980s when California began developing content and performance standards for K-12 students (Fuhrman, 2003). Reforms in the preparation of teachers followed in the 1990s (see Table 2). What may have been vaguely foreseen by some 15 years ago, in retrospect takes the shape of a comprehensive set of policies linking K-12 academic content standards, subject matter preparation of teachers, professional preparation of teacher candidates, support during the induction years, and ongoing professional development of practicing teachers (Olebe, 2001).

Recently, there has been a backlash against state policies. In early 2003, the education deans from 22 California State University campuses initiated a movement to halt implementation of the Teaching Performance Assessment element of the new Program Standards until the state provided funding for the mandate. The last several semi-annual conferences of the California Council for Teacher Education, a state-wide organization comprised of a variety of professionals in teacher education, have been filled with complaints over the direction and pace of change sought by state policy mandates. A recent issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly* (Nelson, 2003a) carried a six article sub-section criticizing the reform mandates from various angles. The tenor of the set of articles was captured in the editor's introduction:

... we are embroiled in ... a legislated attempt at aspiring to educational mediocrity, perceiving learning to teach as simply the acquisition of technical skills in the factory model mode for the purpose of manufacturing widgets on an ever more efficient scale. (Nelson, 2003b, p. 4)

Over ten years ago, Howey (1994) found that teacher educators felt both left out of policymaking and too often the victims of mandates from policymakers. He observed that “. . . more than half of the faculty and deans. . . reported that they either exerted none or very little influence on state policies and regulations” (p. 1) affecting teacher preparation. However, he also found that one of the most severe problems reported by teacher educators was “hyperregulation of teacher education by legislative bodies and state educational agencies” (p. 22). One may read this as reflective of a confused education professoriate. On the other hand, a professoriate that is a respected stakeholder in policymaking might exert a positive influence on a targeted policy that would include attention to the effect on faculty workload.

My point is not to argue one side or the other for state-mandated standards for teacher preparation. Rather, it is to demonstrate the response among a significant portion of teacher education faculty whose lives are directly affected by these imperatives. The articles in the *Teacher Education Quarterly* (Nelson, 2003a) issue are primarily ideologically driven. The authors take issue with a standards-driven reform movement that they characterize as a conservative, corporate, majority culture conspiracy against social justice, progressive education and individual and academic freedom. Without questioning the authenticity of their individual positions, my hunch is that their anger is driven as much by “too much” as by their ideological opposition to the authority of the mandates; indeed, all of the authors affirm the value of standards. Sleeter (2003) points out that “. . . the problem arises when standards become exceedingly prescriptive. . .” (p. 19). Berlak (2003) observes that “. . . writing compliance documents continues to devour teacher educators’ time, attention, and resources that could be better spent using our expertise to address the problems we as professionals know are most pressing. . .” (p. 34). It is the overload as much as the content of the load that has created so much disgruntlement.

Implications for Policymakers

Policymakers should be aware of the working lives of those responsible for implementation. The workload associated with the SB 2042 mandate was large and unforeseen in its full scope in the beginning. Yet, faculty time and workload on the project had to be integrated into the normal round of professional activities. The daily administration of the program did not diminish, the volume of student advising did not lessen, committee work did not evaporate, research and writing remained to be done if faculty wanted to advance in their careers, and service to the profession and the community remained a part of faculty lives.

From the IHE perspective, it sometimes appears that policymakers have little awareness of how faculty conduct their professional lives. Closer consultation between policymakers and the field around implementation issues might reveal some of the potential conflicts so that policy overlaps and unrealistic deadlines can be avoided (Hawley, 1990). Policymakers also need to have a better grasp of the

Professional Lives of Teacher Educators

professional responsibilities of faculty other than the portion of their time devoted to credential-related activities. For most faculty, teaching, advising, committee work, research and writing are the activities around which their professional lives revolve.

There is a substantial body of research indicating that if those who implement policy do not have significant buy-in, the chances of the policy being enacted in recognizable form lessens (Sarason, 1982; Cohen & Ball, 1990; Fullan, 1991). The reaction against the SB 2042 reforms may well be an instance of faculty grudgingly implementing changes that they perceive to have adverse impact on their professional lives. This resistance has an ideological element (e.g., faculty feel the reforms de-emphasize social justice and de-professionalize teacher educators because they are too prescriptive); a fiscal element (resources have not followed legislation in the case of the Teaching Performance Assessment); and a workload element (faculty are wary of taking on responsibilities for mandated program development in addition to their other university-driven responsibilities).

Policy makers need not abandon their legitimate role in establishing policy mandates and implementation guidelines for teacher preparation, but they could do more to understand the impact of policy decisions on the field. In writing about some of the issues involved in schools of education turning teachers in graduate programs into educational researchers, Labaree (2003) identifies how the different working cultures of practitioners and professors lead to different assumptions about the role and validity of forms of knowledge generated by practice and research. He suggests that a greater understanding of “the traits that teachers bring with them. . . need not [lead faculty members] to apologize for seeking to change these teachers into researchers. That, after all, is their job” (p. 21). Similarly, policy makers in the course of doing their “job” might seek to better understand the culture of higher education—its many and varied demands on the attention of faculty, its unique calendar, its system of incentives and rewards—so that implementing mandates better aligns with the demands on time and workload faculty face in their professional lives.

Educational reformers have for some time now realized the importance of the classroom teacher in the implementation of school reform. Cohen and Ball (1990), for example, noted that reform efforts both target teachers for change and identify them as the agents of change. Similarly, in the current reform environment teacher educators are expected to change and also be change agents. Legislators and agency staff should ensure that discussion of implementation issues are on the agendas of future task forces, or explicitly provide for the creation of secondary task forces comprised of those charged with enacting policy, in order to deal specifically with implementation concerns as they affect IHEs. It seems shortsighted to enact idealistic legislation but create implementation requirements that pay little or no attention to the issues surrounding actual implementation.

Policy makers should be better aware of how mandates for reform relate to one another. Mandates can work in harmony or they can clash. Policies that conflict in substance, requirements, or time frames can work against optimal implementation

(Elmore, 2003; Fuhrman, 2003). My own judgment of recent mandates for teacher preparation in California is that they are conceptually harmonious. However, the rollout overlaps and submission deadlines too often conflict in ways that place great stress on those charged with implementation.

An example of a mandate that was harmonious with the larger policy package but conflicted with and actually detracted from faculty efforts at implementing the broader mandate was Assembly Bill (AB) 1059. As one of 19 SB 2042 Standards for Program Quality and Effectiveness, Standard 13 (Preparation to Teach English Learners) was to be integrated into the overall curriculum of the credential program. Programs could address the individual elements of Standard 13 in different ways. The elements could be met in a stand-alone course, be parceled out over several courses, or be met primarily in a single course but also have elements parceled out to other courses. Logic would suggest that whichever way a program approached Standard 13, it would do so within the overall context of program development and that a final approach to the standard would coincide with a finalizing of the overall program document. In short, it did not make sense to develop Standard 13 before developing the entire program, yet that is what faculty were asked to do.

Assembly Bill 1059 required that Standard 13 be developed and submitted for review by July 1, 2002, well in advance of the submission deadline for the complete program document. This meant that as faculty revised programs around all 19 standards, they also had to finalize Standard 13 and submit it for review in isolation from the rest of the program. For us, design of the overall program, and the place of Standard 13 in it, was not fully shaped at the time we had to submit Standard 13 for review. This was problematic on two counts. First, we had to take time away from the larger project to focus on the smaller project. More significantly, we ended up submitting a document for Standard 13 that we knew did not capture completely how we wanted to address the elements of the standard in the curriculum of the program, but we did not yet know how to manifest our objective of integrating Standard 13 throughout the program. Thus, we were not greatly surprised when our Standard 13 submission was returned for more work. We had anticipated rejection; however, we had made the mandated submission deadline, which at the time was the overriding imperative. By the time of re-submission of the Standard 13 document we had worked out the overall program, and the integration of Standard 13 in it, and submitted a much stronger, more thorough plan for addressing the elements of the standard

Policymakers should be more aware of the resource issues involved with implementation. The work of faculty around SB 2042 program revision was almost solely supported by their institutions. Small state grants were available to jumpstart and assist early adopter programs. But for the most part faculty participation came either on top of the normal workload or was compensated by the IHE as extra work. When IHEs provide fiscal support in the form of release time for faculty, the effects are felt somewhere in the budget since a part-time faculty must replace the released

Professional Lives of Teacher Educators

faculty in the classroom. The state provided developmental support through a series of workshops in different state locations, by making staff available for both virtual and real consultation, and by regularly distributing informative documents. When the state fiscal climate took a turn for the worse, this consultative effort tapered off as agency staff left or were re-assigned and budget concerns prevented replacements. There is no doubt that at least some of the resource problems associated with implementation of mandates during this period were attributable to the state budget crisis, resulting in lower funding levels for state agencies as well as IHEs.

An example of how the resource issue created conflict and tension was the implementation of the ambitious Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) for all teacher candidates called for in the initial SB 2042 legislation. The legislation permitted different ways for this mandate to take shape, including an assessment developed by an individual IHE for local use, an assessment developed by the Commission but implemented by IHEs, an assessment developed in concert by two or more institutions that the developing institutions as well as others could utilize, and an assessment administered by the Commission. The authorizing legislation stated that the assessment would be developed and implemented if funding followed in the state budget.

However, because of anticipated costs, the state very quickly let it be known that the Commission-administered assessment would not be an option programs could use. Three possibilities remained. State funding was allocated for a contract (awarded to Educational Testing Services) to develop a state assessment that all programs could administer to their candidates. Several institutions undertook to develop their own assessment utilizing locally available funding. A consortium of public and private institutions developed an assessment to compete with the state version.

Our program was among those that saw the state-administered assessment as potentially viable. It had the advantage of relieving us of all initial developmental and subsequent administrative burdens of implementing the assessment locally, thereby saving us time and resources. In addition, it would give us an independent, external, objective assessment of our candidates. Like all preparation programs in the state, we assess our candidates during student teaching for readiness for the credential. There is an inherent conflict of interest in this process, since no program wants a high failure rate. It is also difficult for faculty to fail candidates with whom they have worked closely in advisement, class, and student teaching. Both supervisors and cooperating teachers traditionally are reluctant to fail student teachers. Since the state-administered assessment was to have been in addition to our local assessment of candidates, it would have provided us with an opportunity to measure our own assessment of student teachers with the assessment of external evaluators. It was an opportunity lost because of resources.

Moreover, the resource issue continued to affect implementation of the assessment in other ways. In early 2003 it became apparent to the state university deans of education that the dollar and time costs of continuing to participate in the

state-developed assessment promised to be enormous. Even though the state had borne the costs of developing the assessment prototype (through federal Title II funds), colleges of education were to bear the implementation costs. At a minimum, these costs included training assessors initially and continuously to use the scoring rubric, re-calibrating veteran assessors regularly, managing a videotaped component of the assessment (including investing in a stock of video equipment), storing assessment artifacts in the event of a challenge, and conducting regular validity and reliability studies. Mindful of the ongoing costs, particularly in a worsening state budget climate, the state university system education deans successfully enlisted the support of the original sponsors of the authorizing legislation in an effort to suspend implementation of the high-stakes assessment element of the law until such time as there would be state funding to support its development and implementation.

Whether earlier attention to the resource issue for IHEs would have prompted a different implementation policy for the assessment is purely speculative. It is clear, however, that by quickly retreating from the idea of a state-administered assessment, policymakers were aware of the high cost factor early on. When it became evident to those in charge of CSU university budgets, i.e., the education deans, that the fiscal impact would be huge, they moved against implementation of this element of the reform. They were willing to bear the costs of SB 2042 reform when they were minimal, i.e., when they did not have a large fiscal impact but were calculated in uncompensated or minimally compensated time for faculty above and beyond their normal workload. However, when the costs of reform promised a large and annually recurring budget item, implementation was slowed or halted altogether. A collision between the state agency and the CSU system might have been avoided had policymakers been more attentive to the fiscal impact of the assessment on higher education.

Policymakers should be more aware of their impact on the field. Policy mandates have been many and far reaching in California in the past decade. State law becomes embodied in program guidelines that can turn out to be overly prescriptive. The extent of the prescriptiveness of guidelines sometimes appears in their written form, but can also be manifest in the review phase, i.e., hidden from initial view but apparent once a program is submitted to a panel of reviewers.

The Standards for Program Quality and Effectiveness that were developed from the SB 2042 legislation are a case in point. On the surface, the 19 standards and their “elements” are open to a variety of implementation formats. For example, they do not stipulate the number of courses or units a program must have, nor where the elements of the standards should appear in which kinds of courses, nor how the material is taught, what the reading list should be, how candidates should be assessed in their university course work, etc. Programs appear to have great latitude in how they are structured to deliver the content mandated in the guidelines. However, once the program document is submitted, the prescriptiveness becomes tighter. Program reviewers look at course syllabi for evidence of learning outcomes, assessments, and course readings that indicate exactly where and how the program

Professional Lives of Teacher Educators

addresses the individual elements of each of the 19 standards. My anecdotal understanding is that only a single program passed initial review and that nearly all of the 80-plus state programs were required to submit second and third review documents. Since these programs are developed by experienced teacher education faculty who, for the most part, have long been working within California guidelines and know how to develop and deliver teacher education programs, one can infer that there is something going on in the review process that is resulting in a far more prescriptive approach to implementation than would be predicted from public statements from state agencies and from a reading of the guidelines.

In our case, we pondered curiously over some of the directions we received for revising our first and then second submissions. For example, we felt we fully addressed the standard for preparing to teach special populations by adding a course on students with exceptionalities to the program. However, our reviewers felt we had not adequately addressed several elements of the standard. After some head scratching, our special education faculty finally determined we were using the vocabulary of special educators and that reviewers were expecting a different vocabulary and thus were missing how and where we had addressed the standard. The prescriptiveness came down to using the right vocabulary, even when it was not the vocabulary used in the field by professors in the subject. Our third submission passed on this standard—with the appropriate wording changes.

Policymakers at the highest levels, i.e., elected officials, need to set large goals. Those charged with developing guidelines for implementation of laws and regulations, including state agencies—who are policymakers by virtue of their power to guide how laws are actually carried out—should compose guidelines in ways that permit different interpretations to meet local conditions. And those responsible for monitoring compliance with guidelines should review programs flexibly rather than through a narrow prescriptive approach.

Implications for IHEs

What can IHEs do, particularly deans and department chairs, to mitigate the negative effects on faculty of an overheated mandate environment? Since external agencies form the constellation in which teacher preparation resides (Hawley, 1990), IHEs need to reach consensus with the agencies and organizations whose mandates most affect them.

Reaching accommodation with state agencies is not necessarily easy. State agencies, at least in California, operate by their own rules and according to their own calendars. An example is the current review of the system for program accreditation by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The Commission historically consults with the field on major issues, and in fact is legally obligated to do so in many instances. Lately, however, it has tended to de-emphasize this kind of collaborative work, which has led to pressure from the field to be more consultative.

In an email notification sent out January 15, 2004, the Commission invited “members of the higher education and K-12 communities and interested parties” to attend a public meeting scheduled for January 22, 2004 in Sacramento “to engage key stakeholders and those interested in accreditation of educator preparation in the development of the plan to review the Commission’s system of accreditation” (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2004). IHE deans, department chairs, program coordinators and faculty are in the group of key stakeholders when it comes to accrediting their programs. Yet, they received notification of an important meeting—for which they would have to shift their calendars, arrange for travel, perhaps make overnight accommodations—with five working days’ notice and, of great importance, during the winter break between semesters when many of them are not on campus to even receive the notification. Here is a good example of a state agency oblivious of the calendar of a major partner in teacher preparation. However, IHEs, presented with imperatives of this type, have no choice but to participate in the best way possible given the conditions.

IHE representatives need to continually make the effort to work with state policymaking bodies to ensure that the IHE perspective is understood. IHEs need to be meaningful participants in state-wide information-gathering forums in the early stages of policy development. They need to be active lobbyists of the legislature. Faculty need to be ready and willing to serve on task forces that develop policy guidelines and implementation frameworks. If IHEs do not make the effort to be players, the game will go on without them. There are resource issues involved with IHEs being active participants that administrators will need to confront.

IHE leaders need to find ways to protect faculty workload. They should seek funding to support faculty work on external mandates wherever they can find it, particularly in difficult fiscal environments. They should involve sufficient numbers of faculty on reform projects to avoid overloading a handful of faculty engaged in the project either by position description or professional inclination. Senior faculty, who are under different performance review pressures than younger faculty, should be encouraged to participate. Performance review policies and guidelines should be reviewed and revised where necessary to honor and reward the work faculty do in teacher education when it does not conform to the traditional university notions of faculty work in the arts and sciences. Action on each of these suggestions will not dramatically alter conditions in the short run, but they offer a level of mitigation of effects on faculty time and workload that may serve to keep key faculty participating in the institution’s responses to policy mandates.

Final Thoughts

In her summary review of 20 years of education reform following publication of *A Nation At Risk*, Fuhrman (2003) poses a challenge for continuing reform efforts. Writing about reform at the K-12 level she says:

Professional Lives of Teacher Educators

If we want improvement for all students, at scale, we'd better think less about new, different reform approaches and more about investing in the necessary capacity to bring about coherent, sustained, instructionally focused strategies. (p. 22)

Might not this be a worthwhile goal for policymakers as they look to improve the preparation of teachers? Perhaps it's time to think less about new reform policies and more about consolidating and extending gains made from the previous 10 years of large scale policy pronouncements.

Policymakers should be wary of policy overload. The principal theme of this paper has been the impact of state mandates on the working lives of IHE faculty. The current extended period of mandated reform contributes to seemingly endless crisis conditions. My sense is that faculty will work only so long in a crisis mode before they either retreat altogether from the project of teacher education or reduce their participation to an unenthusiastic low-throttle level. It may be that states such as California need a legislative and policy moratorium so that reform initiatives of the last 10 years can be put into place, experienced, and refined.

Two benefits, at least, might be gained from a mandate moratorium. First, the crisis mentality might evaporate. Faculty (and other stakeholders) would be able to conduct their professional lives in less of a hothouse climate. Second, it would allow a period of time to gather data on recent reform efforts to ascertain what is working, how, and where. Vinovskis (2003) points out that “. . . the process of identifying promising educational practices, rigorously testing their effectiveness in model programs, and then trying them out in different settings often can take fifteen to twenty years. . .” (p. 116). He maintains that federal education policy has “evolved in fits and starts” because we have not “demonstrated the patience for rigorous and sustained efforts at finding solutions” (p. 116).

This latter point is extremely important before we inaugurate the next round of reforms. We too often mandate reform without a supporting research base and without sufficient discussion of the extended policy implications. The 1996 California Class Size Reduction Initiative is a case in point. There was very little substantive research at the time supporting the policy mandate, and there was virtually no discussion of the implications of class-size reduction on the teaching workforce. As a result, schools were flooded with emergency permit teachers with little or no pedagogical preparation, hard-to-staff schools were hit hardest, and the state has yet to fully regain balance (Bohrnstedt & Stecher, 2002).

What would a respite from new policy initiatives mean for teacher education faculty? Faculty at my institution are fatigued with program revision and renewal. As secondary program coordinator, I have held frequent workshops for accreditation review and state credentialing standards compliance over the past 5 years. I sense that faculty now humor me by attending workshops; that their hearts are not in it as they were when we began the project. I ask them for too much of their time in attending workshops and in the work to do between workshops. Attendance has become sporadic for some faculty; others appear to find reasons to attend only part

of a workshop. They do not see their colleagues in the disciplines called upon to work on program development to the extent they are as teacher educators.

I share their fatigue, yet as the person responsible for compliance, as well as being vested in the intellectually interesting challenge of moving the program forward, I have difficulty seeing where this journey ends. In my almost 10 years as a teacher educator, working in two programs, there has yet to be a time when I have not felt we were rushing through the torrents of reform, our craft in imminent peril of capsizing, yet somehow managing to stay afloat. I suggest that policymakers and educators join forces as a profession and paddle out of the rapids into the calm of the lake, where we can maintain our course without careening from side to side, re-gain our collective breath, and take stock of the surrounding landscape to see just how far we have come—and which direction we should strike out in after crossing the lake.

Note

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