

# ISA Minutes

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**Meeting:** ABET Informational Workshop  
**Date:** Sunday, 20 October 2002  
**Location:** McCormick Place, Chicago, IL  
**Chairman:** Mark Wainwright  
**Minutes By:** Elizabeth Price  
**Distribution:** Attendees

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*Drafted 8 October 2002*

**Attendees:** Roger Blais (University of Tulsa), George Bourgois (Paducah Section), Michael Bovenkamp (Dofaso, Inc.), Jim Lawrence (Retired), Randall Moser (Pennsylvania College), Lowell McCaw (Consultant), Mike Perron (Spartan Controls), Marcus Rasco (DeVry Institute), Yuri Starik (Salt Lake Community College), Ralph Staus (Pennsylvania State University), Tom Stout (Consultant), Terry Tolliver (Solutia), Mark Wainwright (Wainwright Technical Sales), Elizabeth Price (staff)

Mark Wainwright welcomed everyone at 10:40am and stated that the workshop would cover four topics related to ABET: (1) Who Should You Consider ABET?, (2) How does a School Apply?, (3) Site Visit Experience, and (4) Benefits of Accreditation.

## **Overview of ABET Commissions**

McCaw routed a recent ABET newsletter for attendees to review. He stated the four Accreditation Commissions: Engineering, Technology, Applied Science (used to be Related), and Computing (new commission). Institutions with Computational Science programs will fall under CAC. ABET does not accredit a school/institution. They accredit specific programs underneath one of the previously mentioned Accreditation Commissions. Each Commission consists of Program Criteria for the school to choose to follow. ISA supports a Program Criteria within the TAC. The ISA ABET web page is located at:

[http://www.isa.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Educators\\_and\\_Students/Educational\\_Institutions/ABET/Accreditation\\_Board\\_for\\_Engineering\\_and\\_Technology.htm](http://www.isa.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Educators_and_Students/Educational_Institutions/ABET/Accreditation_Board_for_Engineering_and_Technology.htm)

Associations support/provide Evaluators to attend Evaluator training and serve as Observers to the ABET Team doing the visit/review. This allows them to experience a visit and see how an evaluation is done before serving as an official Evaluator. Each school going through a review has a minimum of two visitors per program, a Team Chair and a Program Evaluator. The Program Evaluators have to be from the society under which the Program Criteria falls.

ABET's Commissions recently updated the format for the Criteria used to evaluate schools. Criteria is now based on overall criteria rather than specific hours of credits (bean counting, as some Evaluators called it). Evaluators base their review on an assessment scheme (assessing the overall program and institution) rather than assessing whether or not the school offers particular courses. An institution can decide on their goals and build the program from there. The criteria is

less prescriptive and more based on the mission of the institution and the program. ABET wants to see that both are in sync and measurable. During an Evaluation, the school is also evaluated. Areas such as libraries, support from school administrators, mission of the school, are evaluated during the review. ISA's ABET Program Criteria is online at:

[http://www.isa.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Educators\\_and\\_Students/Educational\\_Institutions/ABET/Program\\_Criteria\\_for\\_MandC\\_Engineering\\_Technology.htm](http://www.isa.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Educators_and_Students/Educational_Institutions/ABET/Program_Criteria_for_MandC_Engineering_Technology.htm)

### **How to Apply**

A school decides they have a program to get accredited. Faculty contacts ABET to get application paperwork and determine what is needed from the school to apply.

Pursuit- McCaw reviewed the timetable for applying to ABET. The process to pursue accreditation begins in January when schools approaches ABET to request an application. The school has hopefully already looked at students to see what material represents their learning. Faculty should estimate a year to collect material from courses within the curriculum and outside. If study/survey is done of the students, the faculty coordinating the ABET application should be aware of what the school has done to address any issues/concerns as well as maintain survey data.

Visit- The actual visit occurs in October or November of the year of application. In March of the following year, ABET provides a preliminary report to the school to address any weaknesses noted in the report.

Decision- Discussion occurs after the Evaluation team provides a report back to ABET. The school is notified in June or July of the following year as to their ABET status.

A question arose as to what was the cost for an ABET visit. It is \$2,500/Evaluator plus \$2,500/additional member. At least \$6,000 should be budgeted for the review. A significant amount of time is required of faculty to gather and coordinate the material necessary for an ABET review. Some faculty members are able to have lighter course loads during the time of the review to gather material; some are not as fortunate.

### **Site Visit Experience**

A strong recommendation came to the table by those who have had their program(s) accredited by ABET. For anyone considering applying, contact a faculty Department Chair at an institution that has experienced an ABET evaluation, preferably where the program was accredited. Ask them to come and provide a "mock" review to provide faculty with strengths and weaknesses of their materials. It is about a year and a half timeframe from the time an institution requests an application to the final notification of their status.

### **Benefits of Accreditation**

Blais added what the benefits of ABET accreditation are. ABET establishes a standard for various schools to meet and sets a level playing field in engineering or technology areas. ISA wrote Program Criteria for programs with Instrumentation or Automation in the title. For employers and parents, they will know what level of education students receive. Some state engineering boards consider ABET accredited degrees as more experience when applying for the Professional Engineers (PE) license.

**ACTIONS:**

- 1) Price to send attendee list with each person's affiliation to all who attended, except for Perron.
- 2) Price to send the presentation of ABET benefits to attendees, too.