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TO: Colleagues and Friends of the Lurie College of Education

FROM: Elaine Chin, Dean 
Lurie College of Education

RE: NCTQ Report

On Tuesday, June 18, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released a report rating the teacher education programs in California and the nation. The report was highly critical of teacher preparation provided by both public and private universities both in California and nationally.

Other than provide the syllabi requested by the NCTQ, neither the Lurie College nor the other 22 colleges of education in the California State University (CSU) system participated in the survey. In 2011, the chancellors of the nation's three largest systems of higher education (CSU, the University of Maryland System, and the State University of New York) raised serious questions about the survey's methodology, which relies exclusively on a paper review of documents and does not include interaction with faculty, teacher candidates or employers. No data on the actual performance of K-12 teachers prepared by the teacher education programs was collected by the NCTQ. When the NCTQ turned a deaf ear to the concerns raised by the chancellors, all three systems declined to participate. They were not alone in not participating.

Independent researchers and scholars have also been very critical of NCTQ's methods. Two recent opinion pieces, one from the [*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*](#) and the other from [*The Washington Post*](#) nicely summarize the methodological flaws in this study.

The Lurie College of Education has a long history of preparing teachers for California's schools. We are proud of our commitment to excellence and equity. Our teacher preparation programs are grounded in best practices derived from research and experience. We engage in data-driven evaluations of our programs and graduates, and make changes whenever the data shows that improvements are needed.

Faculty are equally committed to ensuring that all K-12 students are taught by fully prepared teachers. We ensure that our candidates have extensive and practical preparation in teaching all students how to read and access text to learn content, in teaching core subject areas, in

working with students from diverse communities and backgrounds, and especially with students who are English Language Learners.

Graduates from our program have to demonstrate their competence to teach through a rigorous performance-based assessment that involves their teaching an extended lesson within their student teaching classroom without any assistance from their cooperating teacher. These assessments are scored by external evaluators, many of whom are themselves successful teachers in the field. Not all candidates who enter our program complete this rigorous course of study; faculty want to ensure that only those qualified to teach actually enter the profession.

The Lurie College has invested in new technologies and the training of our faculty in the use of these new technologies in 21st century classrooms. Faculty have modified their own teaching approaches to model for our students how best to reach 21st century learners with 21st century learning tools.

The excellent preparation we provide to our candidates is due in large part to our close and productive relationships with our school partners. We work with local schools to identify appropriate mentor teachers and to provide these mentors with the tools and knowledge to help beginning teachers develop. In addition, the faculty spend extensive amounts of time in the field supervising and providing oral and written feedback to our candidates.

Most recently, the Lurie College adopted a model called “co-teaching” whereby candidates spend significantly more time in classrooms with a mentor teacher during student teaching. In this apprentice-like model of student teaching, the candidates co-plan and co-teach with their mentor teachers. Mentor teachers in turn are provided with professional development by Lurie College of Education faculty in how to support their student teachers. The student teacher/mentor relationship is supported as well by our university-based faculty supervisors. Given adequate funding for this model, our goal is to offer co-teaching approach to student teaching to all candidates in our teacher education programs.

I invite you to learn more about the Lurie College of Education and our work preparing teachers who change the lives of so many children in our community. Please visit our website and read about our accomplishments and current efforts in [*Impact*](#), the college’s newsletter. We recognize that there is no more important work than in preparing educators to teach the next generation of productive and engaged citizens for a democratic society.