

Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology
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Sponsored by the Association of Surgical Technologists and The American College of Surgeons

Chair's Message

By Joseph Long, CST, MPA, EdD

Is Quality Being Compromised via the Assigning of Elevated Grades? (One of Three Papers Being Presented)

Clearly, as part of maintaining higher education's role in the educating and training of individuals, quality and the accurate assessment of students must be viewed as necessary virtues. In assessing students, objective and unbiased measures must be utilized, and therefore, students cannot be perceived as customers; viewed in such a role elevates them to an unwarranted favorable status. Treating the student as a customer undermines the cornerstone of our educational system; the evaluation process of accurately assessing students' knowledge-gained. Grade inflation, or more properly termed grade compression, appears to have infiltrated our educational system, at least in some part and to varying degrees.

Granted, higher education institutions must be fiscally responsible, but has higher education gone astray? Has this vital cog of American Society become nothing more than a social gathering place for evolving minds to wander to and fro while paying high fees for the receipt of a devalued piece of parchment? Could it be that other than a pristine educational experience, higher education has disguised itself as 'big business', as in recent decades more parties have seemed to enter the mix of the post-secondary realm?

What happens in a customer-friendly environment where business practices prevail? In the higher education setting, while many administrators and administrative practices may non-verbally or non-specifically document certain things to advantage the student, they would most likely be in favor of grade inflation; keeping the 'customer' happy. To re-phrase this statement, they would most likely not support tough grading practices; these persons and institutions that rely on keeping the students happy to maintain enrollment numbers often like to refer to students as customers.

The students are not customers. If they are customers, then they are not students. Most colleges and universities have moved far in the direction of viewing their students as customers and viewing education primarily as a "product" or "service" provided to these customers. The problem with this consumer model of education is that, as any successful retail business knows, you have to please the customers or they will take their money elsewhere.

What most students want is to get the highest possible grades for the least amount of work. Even most tenured faculty are unwilling to risk the declining enrollments and negative student evaluations that usually go along with a reputation for being a hardass. (Blue, 2002, p. 1)

If an institution's reputation becomes that of an organization that freely hands out A's, and treating the student as the customer, then how much credibility or notability does the individual receive when he or she boasts of having a degree from such an institution? Furthermore, what does this say of the values and integrity of such an institution that cannot or will not differentiate between student achievement, where

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ARC-ST Board of Directors

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Holiday Schedule

The ARC-ST office will be closed on the following dates:

December 23 and 26, 2005

January 2, 2006

January 16, 2006

February 20, 2006

Executive Director's Corner

By Ronald Kruzel, CST, MA

On behalf of the ARC-ST, I would like to welcome you to the latest "inaugural edition" of the ARC-ST newsletter, the *Communiqué*. Many of you probably remember the *Communiqué*; it has been seen intermittently over the past few years. It is the intent of the ARC-ST to re-establish the *Communiqué* as a routine method of communication with our accredited programs in surgical technology and surgical assisting. Most importantly, it is our hope that the new format of the newsletter will provide usable information and support for our programs. For this first edition, I would like to take a few moments of your time to update you on some of our efforts here at the office.

- The ARC-ST has contracted with MAG, Inc. to update our database and website. The end result of this process will be a more user friendly data entry procedure for the programs, better ability for the ARC-ST staff to access and interpret program data, and a more effective and interactive website. Initial "clean-up" of data entry areas began earlier this fall, with web revision scheduled for early in 2006.
- We have added a full-time staff position in the office to better keep up with the ongoing process of annual reports and general information changes submitted by the programs. Thank you to all of the programs for keeping the ARC-ST updated on a regular basis, not only with the annual report process but with general information updates as well. As we transition to our new data base and reporting system, we will be working with you to better align the annual report submission process with the new data entry system. The additional staff, new database, and re-organization of staff responsibilities will help lessen response time to program submissions and inquiries. We hope to have full implementation by the end of 2006.
- The ARC-ST is in the process of expanding various means to better serve our affiliated programs. Mentoring and orientation of new program personnel, development of data to better support CAAHEP accredited programs in your communities, and enhanced educational opportunities for program staff are just a few of the projects under development. Data collection and development of these various projects has already begun.
- The Board of Directors has approved the development of three ARC-ST sponsored scholarship opportunities for students enrolled in CAAHEP accredited surgical technology programs, as well as surgical technology educators pursuing the CST credential or advanced degrees. I'm happy to announce that we have gone "live" with the scholarship criteria and applications. They can currently be obtained at www.ast.org or by contacting the ARC-ST.

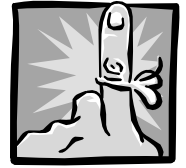
In closing, the ARC-ST is committed to open communication with the educational institutions we serve. If you would like to see additional material or topics presented in the *Communiqué*, let us know. E-mail the ARC-ST at emcfarlane@arcst.org with your ideas. Thank you for working with the ARC-ST.

ARC-ST and LCC-ST Fund Additional Scholarships

During AST's annual conference the ARC-ST and the Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist (LCC-ST) announced commitments to scholarships for the next five years. The ARC-ST has pledged \$15,000 to be awarded as three \$1,000 scholarships annually. Criteria for the award will be determined by mid-August. The LCC-ST announced a five-year, \$10,000 scholarship program. Each year for the next five years, two \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded. The scholarships will be administered by the Foundation for Surgical Technology, www.ffst.org.

Reminder

If you have had changes in program personnel, please let us know.



The *Standards* state that a "program must inform the ARC-ST within a reasonable period of time of changes in the positions of program director/coordinator or full-time surgical technology faculty."

If your program has had a change in said personnel, please notify the ARC-ST office in writing and include a current curriculum vitae, a schedule of responsibilities, and a current resume for each new employee.



AST Annual Conference Caesars Palace, Las Vegas

AST has reserved a block of rooms at a special conference rate of \$134 single or double occupancy, \$154 triple occupancy and \$174 quad occupancy. To take advantage of these great rates, reserve your room now. Reservations must be received before April 21, 2006. In the event that the rooms have sold out before the deadline, AST cannot guarantee that space will be available at these low rates. Phone toll free 800-634-6661; call direct at 702-731-7222.

A one-night deposit is required to guarantee reservations. The 2006 conference registration brochure will mail with the February 2006 issue of *The Surgical Technologist*.

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everyone is excellent, or very close to this superior level? According to one faculty member, from an institution with open-enrollment, "As a 'school of opportunity' . . . , we attract students who are largely ill prepared for college. Yet these students increasingly perform at A & B levels Something is dreadfully wrong with this picture" (McSpirit, Chapman, Kopacz, and Jones, 2000, p. 107). Maybe the A grade should be recognized as the average grade; we could then add additional letters to our grading system, or get back to our roots, re-establish our assessment tools, and stop treating students as customers.

In the field of surgical technology we must be exceptionally cautious in the manner we assess students. Not only must we assess students as accurately as possible, and to the best of our abilities, think of the consequences of allowing someone to complete a program when they have not met the established requirements to be successful in the field. Our administrators must understand, every allied health profession is special in its own way, "square pegs will not fit in round holes," every student cannot be classified as excellent for the purpose of positive 'word of mouth' communications to increase enrollment, and for that matter, there are going to be those students that will not successfully complete a given surgical technology program. Could

you or I possibly be assigning elevated grades to meet expectations of a variety of stakeholders or to appease students and/or parents of students? I ask you to take a look your practices and see if you might need to re-think or re-tool your evaluation processes. If we are not doing what we need to be doing, in the educational realm within our own profession, we may have come to a moral dilemma; we must always return to our foundation, "Aeger Primo."

List of References

Blue, T. (July 15, 2002). Grade inflation: The customer is not always right. *The Irascible Professor: Irreverent Commentary on the State of Education in America Today*, Dr. Mark H. Shapiro. Retrieved July 31, 2002, from <http://irascibleprofessor.com>.

McSpirit, S., Chapman, A., Kopacz, P., & Jones, K. (June 2000). Faculty ironies on grade inflation. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, v27, i2, p. 104.

Dr. Long holds two degrees from the University of Michigan, with focuses on science, history, and public administration, along with a doctoral degree in Higher Education from the University of Sarasota. In the past he has worked as a surgical technologist for 20 years at two different health care institutions, and he also has held a position as Dean of Health and Human Services for a private college. Today, he is the Academic Team Leader for the Surgical Technology Program at Lansing Community College, in Lansing, Michigan.

Annual Reporting and Future Transitions

By Cindy Collinsworth, BA

A common question often received in the ARC-ST office is "When is our program going to receive feedback regarding our annual reports?" The typical outcomes-based process relies minimally on three years, and optimally five years of data to identify and assess trends from the data being collected. With the conclusion of 2005, the ARC-ST will have three (3) full years of data that it may now begin to analyze. This data will be used to identify trends among the surgical technology programs and to evaluate the current outcomes-based system.

So how is this data analysis going to affect each program and what kind of correspondence can you expect from the ARC-ST?

1. At the beginning of October 2005, the ARC-ST began notifying programs via correspondence that re-evaluation and revision of the submission process was underway. This notification process will not conclude until the end of 2005/beginning of 2006. Those programs that are contacted are requested to make the appropriate revisions before actual data analysis begins. If your program received a letter notifying you that your report dates

are being reviewed, please feel free to contact our office and an ARC-ST staff member will assist you in making any necessary revisions.

2. Once the ARC-ST has reviewed all program date information, reported data will be reviewed. Programs may receive letters that include at least one of the following: input regarding reported changes, input regarding reported outcomes data, and/or approval of information submitted. The ARC-ST will initiate this process in 2006 and we hope to complete our correspondence with the programs by mid-2006.

In the meantime, the ARC-ST will be sending out annual report initiation letters for April 1, 2006 submissions in January 2006. These letters will identify when the annual report is due and how to report requested information. To establish consistency and continuity of the outcomes reporting process and data collection, the ARC-ST will be implementing a standardized ARC-ST Reporting Year. In the past ARC-ST requested that

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Standard Interpretation

By Ronald Kruzell, CST, MA and Cindy Collinsworth, BA

In the attempt to assist programs with continued compliance in regard to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Educational Programs in Surgical Technology (Standards and Guidelines)*. The ARC-ST will do a basic review of one *Standard* in each newsletter.

We will begin with Standard I.A.1:

I. Sponsorship

A. Sponsoring Educational Institution

A sponsoring institution must be at least one of the following:

1. A post-secondary academic institution accredited by an institutional accrediting agency that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and authorized under applicable law or other acceptable authority to provide a post-secondary program, which awards a minimum of a certificate at the completion of the program.
2. A foreign post-secondary academic institution acceptable to CAAHEP.
3. A hospital or medical center or branch of the United States Armed Forces.

Standard I.A.1 This is the first *Standard* an educational institution must meet before the surgical technology program can even be considered for programmatic accreditation. The sponsoring institution must have obtained institutional accreditation that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and must offer a minimum of a certificate of completion for the program.

The following is a list of sample institutional accreditors that is recognized by the Council for Higher Education of Accreditation (CHEA) as well as the USDE. This list does not include all accrediting organizations that are recognized by the USDE. This information can also be found at www.chea.org.

REGIONAL ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSA)

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NCA-HLC)

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Technical and Career Institutions (NCA-CASI)

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools The Higher Learning Commission (NEASC-CIHE)

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS)

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (WASC-ACCJC)

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (WASC-ACSCU)

NATIONAL ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS

Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES)

Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology (ACCSC)

Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC)

Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET)

Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS)

Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools Accreditation Commission (AARTS)

Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada Commission on Accrediting (ATS)

Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation (ABHE)

Council on Occupational Education — (COE)

National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, Inc. (NACCAS)

Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools Accreditation Commission (TRACS)

Standard I.A.2 As the field of surgical technology has grown and expanded, we have been approached by institutions in foreign countries such as England, India, Philippines, and Saudi Arabia. These institutions cannot be held to a standard that requires an institutional criteria but must meet internal ARC-ST criteria in order to be considered as an acceptable surgical technology certificate/degree granting institution.

Standard I.A.3 Hospitals and the United States Armed Forces are exempt from the constraints of acquiring the approval of a post-secondary academic institutional accreditation. Hospital-based programs should be recognized by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and must meet internal ARC-ST criteria in order to be considered as an acceptable surgical technology certificate/degree granting institution.

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programs report on their academic or fiscal year, however, the wide interpretation of what an academic or fiscal year is has led to significant inconsistencies in reporting. The ARC-ST Reporting Year will begin on August 1st of each year and finish on July 31st of the following year. Programs will still continue to report their class completion dates as they fall within the newly designated ARC-ST Reporting Year. Those schools who have reports that are due in October 2006 will not receive annual report materials until June 2006. If you have a question regarding when your annual report is due, please contact the ARC-ST office for direction.

One major misconception about the annual report is that it is a "continuing application." The annual report is just that, a report that is required on an annual basis. Submitting the annual report does not constitute the renewal or re-awarding of accreditation.

As mentioned in the executive director's report, another major change that we have already initiated is the redevelopment of the ARC-ST database and the Electronic Annual Report. We have contracted with a new IT organization that is working alongside the ARC-ST to develop a more innovative and user friendly system that will hopefully assist you as you complete the annual reporting process each year. We are really excited about the many annual reporting benefits that this new system will provide. The new system will be launched at the beginning of 2006.

In December 2005 the ARC-ST will begin surveying schools regarding their experiences with the current outcomes indicators. We request your assistance in promptly completing and returning this survey to the ARC-ST office so that we can gather and analyze the results. If you do not receive a survey on or before December 31, 2005, please contact the ARC-ST office and we will forward your program another copy of the survey.

Future Mailings

The *Communiqué* will be going out four times a year. Two of those will be via e-mail. Please make sure we have your correct e-mail address so that you continue to receive each issue. Please e-mail emcfarlane@arcst.org if your e-mail address has changed. Please be sure to include your name and your school name so that we may update our database.

If you know of someone who would like to receive a copy of the *Communiqué* but is not currently on our mailing list, please send the information to the e-mail address listed above or contact us at (303) 694-9262.

Finally, I would like to thank each of you for all the hard work that you have been putting into the outcomes development of your surgical technology programs. It is through your constant and constructive feedback that we are able to continually move toward developing a model of accreditation that provides effective assistance to surgical technology programs. If you have questions regarding the continuing accreditation process, please feel free to contact our office, or access our website at www.arcst.org.

2006 CAAHEP Annual Meeting

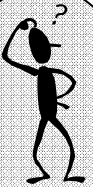
April 21-22, 2006

Kansas City Marriott • Country Club Plaza •
4445 Main • Kansas City, MO 64111 •
Phone 816-531-3000

CAAHEP Meeting rate is \$119 single or double.

Did You Know?

Who and What is the ARC-ST?



ARC-ST History: In December 1972 the American Medical Association's (AMA) Council on Medical Education adopted the recommended educational standards for this field and the Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology (ARC-ST) was formed. The specialized accreditation of programs in surgical technology began in 1974, implementing standards of compliance that were developed by the collaborating organizations the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST). The ARC-ST is an independent not-for-profit Colorado corporation exempt from federal income tax under the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c)(3).

ARC-ST Function: Under the direct supervision of The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), the ARC-ST functions as one of seventeen Committees on Accreditation (CoAs). These committees do the day-to-day work of accreditation, reviewing programs in their specific professional area and formulating recommendations which are then considered by the CAAHEP Board of Directors. ARC-ST works in collaboration with other professional organizations such as the AST, the Liaison Council on Certification (LCC-ST) and ACS to continually promote, research, and currently revise the educational standards of the surgical technology profession.

Schools That Have Received Initial Accreditation:

Congratulations to the following surgical technology programs that were granted accreditation at the 2005 CAAHEP meetings. These programs have successfully completed the accreditation process and have met or exceeded the national standards outlined in the *Standards and Guidelines of an Accredited Educational Program in Surgical Technology* and the *Standards and Guidelines for the Profession of Surgical Assisting*.

Surgical Technology:

Career Colleges of America, Los Angeles, CA
Concorde Career College, San Diego, CA
Aims Community College, Greeley, CO
Concorde Career College, Jacksonville, FL
Okaloosa Walton Community College, Niceville, FL
Waubensee Community College, Sugar Grove, IL
Sanford Brown College, Hazelwood, KS
Somerset Community College, Somerset, KY
Colorado Technical University, N. Kansas City, MO
(formerly Sanford Brown College)
Foothills Surgical Technology Consortium, Shelby, NC
Heritage College, Oklahoma City, OK
Northampton Community College, Bethlehem, PA
McCann School of Business and Technology, Sunbury, PA
Miller-Motte Technical College, Chattanooga, TN
Concorde Career College, Arlington, TX
Dixie State College, St. George, UT

Surgical Assisting

William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, MI
Meridian Institute of Surgical Assisting, Joelton, TN
Nashville State Technical Community College, Nashville, TN

Schools That Have Received Continuing Accreditation:

Bevill State Community College, Sumiton, AL
Southern Union State Community College, Opelika, AL
Mohave Community College, Lake Havasu City, AR
Pima Community College, Tucson, AZ
Bryman College, Hayward, CA
Bryman College, Reseda, CA
Premiere Career College, Irwindale, CA
American College of Health Professions, Redlands, CA
Skyline College, San Bruno, CA
Florida Community College, Jacksonville, FL
National School of Technology-Hialeah, Hialeah, FL
National School of Technology-Kendall, Miami, FL
Indian River Community College, Port St. Lucie, FL
Dalton State College, Dalton, GA
Griffin Technical College, Griffin, GA
Mercy College of Health Sciences, Des Moines, IA
College of Lake County, Grayslake, IL
Ivy Tech State College, Lafayette, IN
Ivy Tech State College, Muncie, IN
Ivy Tech State College, Terre Haute, IN
Wichita Area Technical College, Wichita, KS

Calendar of Events

January 25-28, 2006: CAAHEP Leadership and Board of Directors Meeting, Clearwater, FL

February 19, 2006: SASA Meeting, Tucson, AZ

March 17-18, 2006: ARC-ST Board of Directors Meeting

April 20-22, 2006: CAAHEP Board of Directors Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Commission, Kansas City, MO

May 19, 2006: CAAHEP Board of Directors Conference Call (3:00 pm Eastern Time)

May 29-June 2, 2006: AST National Conference, Las Vegas, NV

September 22-23, 2006: ARC-ST Board of Directors Meeting

November 17, 2006: CAAHEP Board of Directors Conference Call (3:00 pm Eastern Time)

April 13-14, 2007: CAAHEP Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL

Eastern Maine Community College, Bangor, ME
Bunker Hill Community College, Chelsea, MA
Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield, MA
Chesapeake College, Wye Mills, MD
Baker College, Cadillac, MI
Baker College, Port Huron, MI
St. Cloud Technical College, St. Cloud, MN
South Central Career Center, West Plains, MO
East Central Community College, Decatur, MS
College of Albemarle, Elizabeth City, NC
Wake Technical College, Raleigh, NC
Edgecombe Community College, Tarboro, NC
Miller-Motte Technical College, Wilmington, NC
Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY
Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, NY
Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, OH
Columbus State Community College, Columbus, OH
Ivy Tech State College, Columbus, OH
Lakeland Community College, Kirtland, OH
Great Plains Technology Center, Lawton, OK
Great Lakes Institute of Technology, Erie, PA
Midlands Technical College, Columbia, SC
Western Dakota Technical Institute, Rapid City, SD
Tennessee Technology Center, Crossville, TN
Tennessee Technology Center, Jackson, TN
Tennessee Technology Center, Paris, TN
El Paso Community College, El Paso, TX
San Jacinto College, Pasadena, TX
Howard College, San Angelo, TX
Naval School of Health Sciences, Portsmouth, VA
Bellingham Technical College, Bellingham, WA
Clover Park Technical College, Lakewood, WA

Congratulations!