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Cal Poly Dean Heads Education Review at Kuwait University

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Bonnie Konopak, dean of Cal Poly's College of Education, is helping the Kuwait University College of Education's efforts to attain international recognition.

Konopak, an expert in accreditation in the United States, recently traveled to Kuwait to review the university's education program and determine whether it is ready for the new International Recognition of Teacher Education.

While the United States has had national accreditation of teacher education for over 50 years, the concept is new to universities abroad, Konopak said. "However, a growing number of institutions are interested in benchmarking their programs against international standards, following similar accreditation reviews in engineering, business and other disciplines," Konopak said.

She has been a long-term member of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and serves on the Board of International Reviewers for the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education in Washington, D.C.

As part of the process, Konopak and Abdullateef Haidar Al Hakimi, education dean from the United Arab Emirates University, met with administrators, faculty and students at Kuwait University, and visited a local school to observe student teachers

"Teacher education programs in Kuwait face similar challenges as those in the United States," Konopak said. "Faculty stress theory-based pedagogy and the use of technology for instructional purposes, while teacher candidates are concerned about daily routines in the classroom and struggle with the scarcity of computers."

Konopak conducted a similar review at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates in 2003.

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