



News Release

Leadership and Quality Assurance in Applied Science, Computing, Engineering, and Technology Education

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ABET Names George D. Peterson, Ph.D., P.E., Its 2009 Grinter Award Recipient

Baltimore, MD — ABET, Inc., has announced the 2009 recipient of its prestigious Linton E. Grinter Distinguished Service Award: **George D. Peterson, Ph.D., P.E.** Peterson will accept this award during the 2009 ABET Annual Awards Banquet in San Antonio, Texas, October 29.

ABET is the recognized accrediting body for college and university programs in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology. This award, the organization's highest honor, is named for Linton E. Grinter, a pioneer in engineering and technology education and the first individual to receive the Distinguished Service Award from ABET's predecessor, the Engineers' Council for Professional Development (ECPD). The award recognizes ABET volunteers who follow in Grinter's footsteps and surpass even the highest service expectations of the organization.

Peterson's award citation will read:

"For his extraordinary vision that made ABET a global leader in the determination of quality in higher education in general, and in the disciplines that ABET accredits in particular; for, as a volunteer and then as Executive Director, instilling the principles of continuous quality improvement in ABET's accreditation criteria and strategic planning and in mutual recognition agreements; and for elevating ABET to a leadership role in transforming applied science, computing, engineering, and technology education worldwide."

Peterson is ABET's Managing Director for International Business Development and Executive Director Emeritus. He served as the organization's Executive Director for more than 15 years before assuming his current position in 2008.

"George moved the organization forward in so many ways, especially in how ABET conducts accreditation activities," **ABET President Joseph L. Sussman, Ph.D.**, said. "This began when he secured a grant from the National Science Foundation in 1994 that allowed ABET to conduct the workshops that resulted in *Engineering Criteria 2000*, the forerunner of outcomes-based criteria. He was so instrumental to the development of these new criteria, which are becoming the accepted standard for assessment."

Peterson served as the principle investigator for several grants that ABET received, some of which enabled the organization to reach out to faculty in technical programs with regional workshops and special activities, such as the Technological Educational Initiative. These events helped to disseminate information about the new criteria and trained faculty about the fundamentals of program assessment and continuous quality improvement practices. Peterson assisted in developing outcomes-based criteria for the other three areas that ABET accredits — applied science, computing, and technology — and spearheaded the efforts to evaluate the criteria's effectiveness through an extensive longitudinal study in 2005.

"Additionally, George fostered much of ABET's recent growth," Sussman continued. "During his tenure, he expanded ABET's role in the accreditation of technical programs when he helped to facilitate the merger between ABET and CSAB, Inc., and assisted in

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founding the current Computing Accreditation Commission. He brought the organization's membership up from 27 technical and professional societies to its current 30. And he oversaw the number of ABET-accredited programs increasing from 2,300 programs in the United States only to more than 2,900 programs worldwide."

Peterson has been pivotal to ABET achieving the worldwide recognition that it has today, particularly through his activities in the international arena. He furthered between ABET and other international accreditation systems several mutual recognition agreements, which recommend that graduates from recognized programs in countries that have signed this agreement are afforded the same rights and privileges as those graduates from recognized programs in the home country. He worked extensively with the Washington Accord, a mutual recognition agreement focused on undergraduate engineering education, and volunteered to have ABET serve as the accord's secretariat for four years. In addition, Peterson has initiated 14 memoranda of understanding. These are agreements between ABET and a fledging peer accrediting agency that encourage the sharing of best practices and allows ABET to provide assistance in the development of accreditation processes and training workshops for the other agency's staff and volunteers.

Among Peterson's other achievements as ABET Executive Director are revitalizing the organization's Industry Advisory Council so that ABET can gather input and discuss concerns with the primary employers of graduates from accredited programs — the industry, business, and government community. He endorsed the ABET Board of Directors' addition of Public Members, individuals who are not affiliated with the fields that ABET accredits through either training or practice but volunteer to provide impartial input for ABET's governing activities. Currently, the ABET Board has five Public Members. Furthermore, Peterson has overseen the implementation of new governance documents and a new financial model and has led ABET's strategic planning process.

Peterson has held numerous volunteer positions over his distinguished career. As an ABET volunteer, he served as a program evaluator for electrical engineering programs and as a member and then as the 1991-92 Chair of the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC). He was a member of the Education Activities Board's Committee on Engineering Accreditation Activities for IEEE, Inc. He served on the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Committee on Recognition and International Commission and currently chairs the CHEA Specialized Advisory Panel.

George D. Peterson was inducted as a Fellow of ABET in 1993 and has been honored with numerous awards from professional and educational organizations. He has received the 2006 Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Education Society Achievement Award; the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humanities from the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in May 2001; the University of Illinois Electrical and Computer Engineering Alumni Association 2000 Distinguished Alumnus Award; the 1999 Black Engineering of the Year Award for the Promotion of Higher Education; and the 1990 IEEE Meritorious Achievement Award in accreditation activities. He is a Fellow of IEEE, a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers of Ireland, and a Fellow of the Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) of the United Kingdom.

The award's namesake, Linton E. Grinter, received the first Distinguished Service Award from the ECPD in 1972. Grinter showed an outstanding record of leadership within the engineering community and ECPD, and the Board Executive Committee that year not only gave the new award to Grinter but decided to call it the Linton E. Grinter Distinguished Service Award. Among Grinter's legacy are three reports that have had major effects on technical education: (1) the *1945 Manual of Graduate Study in Engineering*; (2) the groundbreaking *1955 Report of the Committee on Evaluation of Engineering Education*, now known as "The Grinter Report" — a major work in the development of engineering curricula that outlines specific objectives for both the technical and humanities areas of study necessary for future engineers; and (3) the *1972 Report on Engineering Technology Education*. Grinter's powerful insight into the future of the engineering profession inspired and impacted not only the ECPD of yesteryear, but the ABET of today.

A complete list of individuals who have received the Linton E. Grinter Distinguished Service Award is available at the following website: <http://www.abet.org/grinters.shtml>.

The ABET Annual Awards Banquet is held as part of each year's ABET Annual Meeting. The 2009 Annual Meeting — *Collaborate, Innovate & Transform! Tackling Today's Educational & Professional Challenges* — will take place in San Antonio, October 29-30.

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ABET, Inc., the recognized accreditor for college and university programs in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology, is a federation of 30 professional and technical societies representing these fields. Among the most respected accreditation organizations in the U.S., ABET has provided leadership and quality assurance in higher education for more than 75 years. ABET currently accredits some 2,900 programs at more than 600 colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. Over 1,500 dedicated volunteers participate annually in ABET activities. ABET also provides leadership internationally through workshops, consultancies, memoranda of understanding, and mutual recognition agreements, such as the Washington Accord. ABET is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.