



Contact: Lil Hughes Knipp  
Tel: (410) 347-7700  
E-mail: lknipp@abet.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 4, 2010

## **Former Executive Director George D. Peterson, Ph.D., P.E., to Retire from ABET**

*Baltimore, MD* — Following more than 16 years in professional leadership positions with the organization, Managing Director for International Business Development and Executive Director Emeritus **George D. Peterson, Ph.D., P.E.**, will retire from ABET, Inc., effective February 1, 2010.

“George Peterson’s commitment to improving the quality of higher education has been unwavering over the past two decades, as evidenced through his service as an educator, an ABET volunteer, ABET Executive Director, and most recently, ABET Managing Director for International Business Development,” ABET Executive Director Michael K. J. Milligan, Ph.D., P.E., said.

Peterson began his association with ABET as a program evaluator for electrical engineering programs from IEEE, Inc. (then known as the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) and served on the society’s Education Activities Board’s Committee on Engineering Accreditation Activities. He became a member of ABET’s Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) in 1986 and became the commission’s chair for the 1991-92 accreditation cycle.

The ABET Board of Directors hired Peterson as the organization’s Executive Director in 1993. Peterson went on to hold this position for more than 15 years, shepherding the organization through a period of tremendous change. As ABET Executive Director, he was instrumental in major improvements throughout the organization, including the development of ABET’s first strategic plan, the introduction and advancement of outcomes-based criteria, the integration of CSAB and computing programs into ABET, and the first national assessment of the effectiveness of outcomes-based criteria. In addition, he played pivotal roles in opening the Washington Accord to additional engineering accrediting organizations, establishing mutual recognition agreements for technology and computing programs, and advancing the participation of the ABET volunteers. Throughout his term, he kept ABET focused on improving the quality of technical education and thus improving the quality of the graduates of those programs.

In fall of 2008, Peterson assumed the newly created position of ABET’s Managing Director for International Business Development and Executive Director Emeritus. As such, he retained his responsibility for many of ABET’s international activities, including those surrounding mutual recognition agreements among accrediting organizations, memoranda of understanding with fledging peer accrediting agencies, and the recent expansion of ABET accreditation to non-U.S. programs in the fields of applied science, computing, engineering, and technology.

“George has been so instrumental in raising the visibility and importance of quality assurance in technical education, both within ABET and worldwide,” Milligan said. “Neither would be where they are today if it were not for his leadership.”

In October 2009, Peterson received the Linton E. Grinter Distinguished Service Award, ABET’s highest honor. His award citation read as follows:

*“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."*

In addition to his service to ABET, Peterson has had a long and distinguished career. He served as Head of the Faculty and Teacher Development of the Division of Undergraduate Education and the Program Director in the Undergraduate Science, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Division at the National Science Foundation (NSF) in Washington, D.C.; as Chairman of the Department of Electrical Engineering at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; as Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Electrical Engineering at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland; and as Professor of Electrical Engineering at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He also served for more than 23 years on active duty in the U.S. Air Force, retiring at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Peterson 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; the 1990 IEEE Meritorious Achievement Award in accreditation activities; and as mentioned previously, ABET's Linton E. Grinter Distinguished Service Award in 2009. He is a Fellow of ABET, 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.

George D. Peterson earned his B.S. in electrical engineering from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, his M.S. in electrical engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology, and his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from the University of Illinois. He is a registered Professional Engineer in the states of Colorado and Maryland.

###

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.