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The Institute for Creation Research's quest for Texas certification of its graduate school, which would offer a master's degree in science education, is on hold, at the ICR's request. A preliminary assessment of the ICR's facilities described the educational program as "plausible," adding, "The proposed degree would be generally comparable to an initial master's degree in science education from one of the smaller, regional universities in the state," but a subsequent [outcry](#) [4] from the scientific and educational communities apparently prompted the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to review the assessment and to request further documentation from the ICR. Its application is now expected to be considered at the THECB's next meeting, on April 24, 2008.

The THECB's commissioner, Raymund A. Paredes, [explained](#) [5] to *Education Week* (January 2, 2008) that the preliminary assessment focused on whether the ICR's graduate school is a stable institution with adequate resources. Now, however, the THECB is considering the merits of the program itself. "Our primary objective in looking at this program is to make sure any master's degree in science education will prepare teachers who can get students in high school ready to do college-level work in science," he said. NCSE's Joshua Rosenau was dubious about whether the ICR's program qualified, noting that presenting a creationist perspective as a rival to evolution is "presenting nonscience."

Subsequently, the *Austin American-Statesman* (January 10, 2008) [reported](#) [6] **[Link broken]**, "Paredes has asked an informal panel of scientists and science educators to comment on the institute's curriculum, which is flavored with a Christian worldview." Although members of the panel were asked not to talk to the press, the newspaper inferred, "It's likely that panelists favor a curriculum free of creationist views," citing the fact that one panelist signed a [letter](#) [7] protesting the Texas Education Agency's treatment of Chris Comer. Paredes stressed, however, that his goal was "making sure both ICR and the scientific and science education community have a full opportunity to express their views on this proposal."

Paredes also reportedly floated the idea that the ICR offer a degree not in science education but in creation studies, a proposal that Steven Schafersman of [Texas Citizens for Science](#) [8] applauded, telling the *American-Statesman*, "It would be churlish to deny ICR the ability to grant a graduate degree when we allow theology schools and Bible colleges to grant graduate degrees ... What we object to is letting them grant a degree in science education. That is a prevarication." However, a spokesperson for the THECB would not confirm that the idea of a degree in creation studies was suggested, [telling](#) [9] the *Dallas Morning News* (January 11, 2008) that "no specific recommendations" have been made.

Interviewed by Inside Higher Ed (January 16, 2008), Paredes [said](#) [10] that he asked the ICR for further information regarding three specific areas of concern. He wanted to know how the ICR planned to ensure that students in the on-line program would be exposed to the experimental side of science. He also expressed concern about the ICR's curriculum -- "Their curriculum doesn't line up very well with the curriculum available in conventional master of science programs here in Texas," he said. "I wanted them to either revise the curriculum or explain why it departed from the norm" -- and its claims about the research conducted by its faculty members.

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