

Accreditation NOTES

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Accreditation and the Transfer of Credit

by

Barbara Beno, Ph.D., Executive Director

In the process of developing the Higher Education Reauthorization Act, Congress has heard from many individuals and groups concerns about the ability of students to transfer credit, and to complete their educational goals in a timely manner. The controversies surrounding this issue are likely to result in new legislated requirements of institutions and accreditors. The ACCJC has revised its Policy on Transfer of Credit (June 2004 first reading). This article explores some of the background to and the rationale for the policy revision.

Complexities in Transfer of Credit

All credit is not alike. Student mobility and institutional diversity in both mission and pedagogy pose significant challenges for students seeking to move credits around American higher education. American higher education is a loosely coupled “system” in which shared professional values and shared access to financial aid are probably the key unifying elements. There are no agreements that span this loosely coupled system and that ease the way for students to move about throughout it.

Many students want or need to transfer credit. Some seek to assemble credits from a variety of institutions they attend while pursuing their degree or certificate. Other students seek to transfer credits and degree requirements as they complete a course of study and transfer to an institution that provides a higher degree level. Other students change majors and institutions in their search for a career and want to bring along credits.

Institutions seek to define their educational programs in line with mission and philosophy. The diversity of institutional missions leads to important nuanced differences in courses or credits.

- Many institutions are designing courses to do more than provide content, but to provide specific learning experiences, e.g., work based experience, case studies, team work experiences, and community service experience.
- Institutions are also providing programs of study in which a number of courses are taken simultaneously by a cohort of students, and the courses are designed to provide interdisciplinary or related learning experiences. For example, learning communities and adult student cohort programs do this.
- Institutions may offer contextualized classes or “applied” academic courses to support contextualized learning. For example, a college program may offer an *applied physics* class that emphasizes learning through application of principles of physics and emphasizes sensory activities rather than memorizing theory.

- Some institutions offer credit for experience or credit by exam, in order to give students credit for learning they have already accomplished and to simply certify what students have learned.

All institutions design curriculum to address their particular mission and the populations they serve. Accreditation imposes a “bottom line” – that postsecondary education be **postsecondary** in content and quality. That requirement, however, does not set any other parameters – of breadth of content or pedagogical style; of the degree of integration of courses or of the holistic nature of an institution’s educational programs.

The diversity of institutions, and the variety of courses, approaches to learning and assessment of learning benefit American higher education by providing choice and enhancing development of effective educational practice. However, diverse institutions collectively offering such a variety of learning experiences may not view individual credits as replaceable, may not regard one kind of learning experience as the true equivalent of another kind in meeting the institution’s defined requirements for the degree. Transfer of credit is not certain.

The tensions around transfer of credit

There are basic differences in perspective, values and needs between students seeking to transfer credits and institutions considering acceptance of transfer credits.

1. *Students’ perspectives*: Students have “earned” the credits, and want them to be as transportable as possible. Credits are like currency and students would prefer that the currency be of equal value at all institutions where they try to spend the currency. Students do admit that there are differences in educational experiences at different institutions. If credit is going to be of different value at different institutions, students would like a very clear description of those differences and how to navigate the world of higher education so that they know how they may be able to use their credits in seeking to transfer. Many students change institutions out of necessity due to changes in family residence, job, or other life circumstance. They want to achieve their educational goals efficiently and minimize repetition of coursework.

2. *Receiving institution’s perspectives*: Institutions believe that decisions to accept transfer of credit may affect institutional integrity or degree integrity. Credits are the building blocks of a certification or academic award and the institution has to ensure the building blocks are sound, fitting the qualities (or characteristics) of the education the institution promises to provide. All credits are not alike. The transferred credits have to be appropriate to a University’s educational design.

Receiving institutions also face a workload issue in reviewing credits for transfer. When institutions perceive potential student demand on this process as large or beyond their ability to afford or manage the process, they may be more prone to set up easy and exclusive screens to limit what transfer of credit they will consider. Thus, it becomes convenient for an institution to use accredited status of the sending institution as the screen.

Finally, most institutions have set a maximum on the number of credits the institution will accept as counting for its own degree—the residency requirement. Most will argue that degree integrity requires the institution’s own faculty to provide a certain amount of the students’ educational experiences.

3. *Sending institutional perspective(s)*: Sending institutions want their students to move easily when they seek to transfer credit. Some sending institutions seek improvement in transfer of credit as a means to compete for students in the educational marketplace. Student difficulties in transferring credit can affect the reputation, the enrollment, and the financing of sending institutions. Many sending institutions perceive barriers to transfer of credit as “unfair” to students, or as an unfair market advantage for those institutions that refuse to accept transfer of credit. Within state higher education systems, public two year or technical colleges find it particularly vexing when public four-year institutions appear to resist accepting transfer students. Many nationally accredited institutions are frustrated that regionally accredited institutions refuse to accept transfer of credit.

4. *Congress' perspective*: Fundamentally, Congress is concerned about students' ability to transport their credits and achieve their educational objectives without having to repeat classes or credits unnecessarily; this is perceived as saving financial aid monies as well as speeding students' progress toward degrees. Inherent in this focus is a bias toward the currency view of credits – that credits are a currency that a student should be able to earn once and then use; that a course in higher education is pretty much the same course at all higher education institutions.

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Goals for Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act included the following principle: *receiving institutions should not deny transfer of credit solely based on what organization accredits the sending institution.*

The Role of Accreditors

I think it is possible to determine the proper role of the accreditors in helping to address the complexity of issues associated with transfer of credit.

There are several very important purposes of higher education accreditation articulated by CHEA concerning the roles and purposes of accreditation. The first is the role of the accreditors in providing quality assurance to the public, particularly to students or prospective students. The second is the role of accreditation in protecting the values of higher education, including academic freedom. The third is the role of accreditation in preserving the diversity of institutional types and missions of American higher education. In fulfilling the first of these three roles, there is much that accreditors could do to assist in the complexities and difficulties of transfer of credit. The second and third roles, protecting academic freedom and supporting institutional diversity, really militate against action by accreditors to require any specific kinds of transfer of credit.

In their **role of assuring quality**, accreditors can ask institutions to provide very clear policies on transfer of credit, to develop and implement a fair process for considering transfer of credit, and to make all of this known to students, the public, and other institutions. In many cases, there may need to be institutional policies as well as policies for particular programs or majors. This would speak to the need of students to know how earned credits

will fare in attempts to transfer them to any particular institution. Accreditors, in requiring an institutional policy and practice, can also require institutions NOT to use accreditation as a sole basis for refusing to accept transfer of credit. This would address the CHEA principle stated above.

Accreditors can also ask institutions to provide information to students and prospective students on what *principles* underlie the institution's decisions to consider and accept transfer credits. For example, if the institution has a principle that limits the total number of credits that are transferable and applicable to its degree, or is one that asks all students to go through cohort learning experiences together and therefore does not permit transfer credits in, or any other academic factors that proscribe transfer of credit, it should make its principles clear to students.

Finally, in their role of assuring quality, accreditors should insure that institutions claiming that their courses or programs can lead to transfer publish clear and *factual* information. This is the "truth in representation" standard that many accreditors have adopted. That information could distinguish between (1) courses (or programs) that are transferable because articulation agreements exist or there are genuine patterns of acceptance, (2) those courses which are believed by the sending institution to be generally acceptable as a transfer course, and (3) those classes for which there is no basis to assume transferability or which are known to be non-transferable

In their **role of supporting academic freedom**, accreditors should not define rules for transfer of credit, require institutions to accept transfer of credit, or otherwise enforce any governmental efforts to interfere with what is basically academic freedom – the ability of the institution to determine its curriculum, degree requirements, and policies for awarding credit. However, for institutions that do claim that they will accept transfer students, or transfer of credit, all of the requirements described immediately above this section should apply. If institutions accept transfer of credit, they should explain their policies and practices and apply them fairly to all students. Inevitably, market forces – i.e., the desire to attract enrollments – drive many institutions open to transfer students. Market forces may ultimately force institutions into more "open" policies for accepting credit, but accreditors should not force those policies open.

In their role *of preserving and supporting the diversity of institutional types and missions* in U.S. higher education, accreditors must also avoid imposing requirements that force institutions to accept transfer of credit. Accreditors evaluate institutional quality in the light of the institution's own unique mission. Decisions about transfer of credit need to be made by each institution, in the context of its own mission. Accreditation standards have to be written broadly to address diverse institutions; an overly prescriptive policy will not work .

Conclusions:

Accreditors can and should play a stronger role in assuring that institutions provide clear and accurate information to the public on transfer of credit policies and practices, on the specific parameters of transfer that the institutions use to limit transfer *in*, and in the information they provide to students and prospective students on those students' abilities to transfer credit *out*.

The majority of our institutions do not have clear and articulated policies, many have not had thoughtful and current dialogue about what those policies should be and the principles or values that should underlie them. Accreditors can encourage this work be done, and that will ease the difficulties around transfer of credit.

Postscript

As institutions move to develop student learning outcomes for courses and programs, it may be that the arcane discussion of transfer of credits will be significantly changed. The future accreditors have imagined is one in which student learning outcomes are a core result of education; students will be transferring learning outcomes – knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, etc. Institutions should be able to apply assessment strategies they have developed for specific learning experiences on their own campuses to assess the learning outcomes students wish to “transfer” in. Then, perhaps, transfer of “credit”, and all of the receiving institution's concern with method of learning, will lose its *cache*, and demonstration of prior learning will take its place.

Please note that the Commission, at it June 2004 meeting, acted to approve a “Policy on Transfer of Credit” for a first reading. This policy will now go out to member institutions for their comment preparatory to a second reading by the Commission at its January 2005 meeting.

June Commission Actions: Reaffirmed Accreditation

Allan Hancock College
Chaffey College
College of the Siskiyous
Glendale Community College
MiraCosta College
Monterey Peninsula College
Palau Community College
Santa Monica College

Placed on Warning

College of Micronesia-FSM

Imposed Probation

American Academy of Dramatic Arts West
Brooks College

Granted Candidacy

West Hills Lemoore Center

Accepted Midterm Report

Copper Mountain College
Los Angeles County College of Nursing and
Allied Health
Los Angeles Mission College
Los Angeles Valley College
MTI College
Riverside Community College

Accepted Focused Midterm Report

Cañada College
College of San Mateo
Los Angeles Pierce College
Western Career College

Accepted Focused Midterm Report with Visit

Imperial Valley College
Northern Marianas College
Skyline College

Accepted Progress Report

College of the Sequoias
Golden West College

Accepted Progress Report with Visit

College of Alameda
Laney College
Lassen College
Merritt College
Palo Verde College
San Bernardino Valley College
San Joaquin Delta College
Southwestern College
Vista College

Removed Warning

Merritt College

Continued on Warning

Leeward Community College
Northern Marianas College

Ordered Show Cause

College of the Marshall Islands
D-Q University

Accepted System Report with Visit

Hawaii Community College System

Approved Substantive Change

College of Micronesia-FSM: offer Associate of Applied Science Degree Program in Telecommunications, Electronics Technology, and Building Technology.

College of Oceaneering: change of mission, acquire assets of Advanced College of Technology, change name to National Polytechnic College of Engineering and Oceaneering, offer an associate degree in Engineering Technology.

Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising: seek joint accreditation for Baccalaureate Degree

Mt. San Jacinto College: add program through distance learning

Vista Community College: move campus to a new location

Windward Community College: integrate Employment Training Center into the operations of the College

June Commission Actions: Policies

First Reading: *These policies will be circulated to member institutions for comment preparatory to a second reading by the Commission at the January 2005 meeting.*

Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status

This policy will require that all accredited institutions, or individuals acting on their behalf, exhibit integrity and responsibility in advertising, student recruitment, and representation of accredited status. The policy details advertising, publications, and promotional literature; student recruitment activities; and provides language to be used in representing accredited status.

Policy on the Rights and Responsibilities of ACCJC and Member Institutions in the Accrediting Process

This policy asserts the commitment of ACCJC to member institutions and delineates ACCJC's rights and responsibilities as well as the rights and responsibilities of member institutions. It emphasizes the voluntary, nongovernmental, self-regulatory nature of the accreditation process.

Policy on Transfer of Credit

This policy replaces an older policy; it addresses the problems created by the fact that the majority of students attending two-year and community colleges typically attend more than one institution before completing their degree or certificate program. It addresses the necessity for an institution to establish policies on transfer of credit that function to provide students with fair and equitable evaluation of credits they wish to transfer.

Second Reading:

New ACCJC Policies to Replace Nationally-developed Policies :

Policy on Award of Credit

This policy will require that institutions maintain policies and procedures that assure award of credit for educational experiences that is based on student achievement of the stated learning outcomes, comparability of that learning to other institutions of higher education, and the appropriateness of the learning experience for the degree or program offered. It delineates criteria for award of credit.

Policy on the Benefits of Accreditation

This policy describes the Commission's role as a gatekeeper for a threshold of quality by ensuring that accrediting actions sustain and enhance the quality of and maintain the core values of higher education. It asserts the Commission's intent to serve the public interest by providing beneficial information on its actions to students, institutions, and the public.

Policy on Closing an Institution

This policy addresses the activities that attend the closing of an institution and requires that a governing board fully inform all constituents of the potential closure as early as possible and that it provide for student completion of programs and the securing of student records. It also addresses the provisions for faculty and staff, the disposition of assets, obligations to creditors, and coordination with ACCJC.

Policies to be eliminated (replaced by new ACCJC policies):

Policy Statement on the Role and Value of Accreditation
Policy Statement: Considerations When Closing a Postsecondary Educational Institution

Changes in Commissioners

Commissioners ending terms on the Commission

Dr. Judith Endeman



Dr. Endeman, former Superintendent of the Ramona Unified School District, was appointed to represent the Schools Commission of WASC in July 1998. Dr. Endeman served on many evaluation teams as part of her duties as a Commissioner, including several visits to colleges in the Western Pacific, and she chaired

the Commissions committee on Evaluation and Planning.

Dr. Lucy L. Killea

Dr. Killea, a resident of San Diego, began service on the Commission in July 1998 as a public member. Dr. Killea had served in the California State Legislature as both a member of the Assembly and as a Senator. In addition to service on teams, Dr. Killea served on the Substantive Change Committee of the Commission, the committee charged with review of institutional requests for



acceptance of programmatic changes.

Mr. Garman "Jack" Pond

Mr. Pond, currently Acting Dean of Arts and Sciences and former Professor of English at Leeward Community College in Pearl City, Hawai'i, was appointed to the Commission in July 1998 as faculty. As part of his service to the Commission, Mr. Pond served on the Policy Committee as well as on many teams.



Dr. Joyce Tsunoda

Dr. Tsunoda is Emeritus Chancellor for the Community Colleges, University of Hawai'i and Distinguished Visiting Senior Scholar, East-West Center. Dr. Tsunoda served on other Regional Accrediting Commissions and on the president's advisory committee on the formulation of the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). She

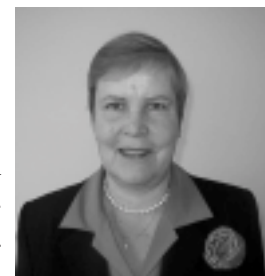
began service on the Commission in 1996, representing the seven Hawai'i Community Colleges.

New Commissioners

Newly-selected Commissioners

Ms. Christina L. Dyer

Ms. Dyer was appointed to represent the Schools Commission of WASC. She serves as a public member of the Schools Commission and is currently its chair. Ms. Dyer, an attorney in private practice, has broad experience in education and accreditation, having served as counsel to school districts as well as having had experience as a teacher. Her service begins July 1, 2004.



Dr. Sherrill Amador



Dr. Amador was appointed as a public member; her service on the Commission begins July 1, 2004. Dr. Amador recently retired as president/superintendent of Palomar College, having served as president of Cuyamaca College before coming to Palomar College. Her accreditation activities include serving on numerous evaluation teams as a team member as well as recent chairing of several

teams. Dr. Amador also served on the one of the task forces that developed the 2002 accreditation standards. She is a resident of Escondido.

Ms. Margaret Tillery

Ms. Tillery was appointed as a faculty member and will begin service on the Commission on July 1, 2004. She is currently a faculty member at Allan Hancock College where she serves as a learning disabilities specialist. Ms. Tillery, who has served on many accreditation evaluation teams and as Accreditation Liaison Officer, has been an officer in the Academic Senate.



Dr. Norval Wellsfry



Dr. Wellsfry, a faculty member who teaches computer information science and accounting at Cosumnes River College, was appointed as a faculty representative. He has been active at both the state and national level in leadership roles and has chaired an institutional self study as well been a member of many accreditation evaluation teams. His service begins July 1, 2004.

Mr. Michael Rota

Mr. Rota was appointed to represent the seven community colleges of the University of Hawai‘i. He is currently the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (Community Colleges) and Professor, University of Hawai‘i System; he has been with the University of Hawai‘i for the past thirty-five years. He has chaired institutional self studies, served as accreditation liaison officer, served on evaluation teams, and chaired several teams both in the Pacific and California. Mr. Rota begins service on the Commission on July 1, 2004.



Commissioners Selected for a Second Term

ACCJC regulations allow Commissioners to serve two three-year terms. They must apply for a second term through the usual selection procedures.

Ms. Lurelean B. Gaines

Ms. Gaines is chair of the department of nursing at East Los Angeles College, has been Vice President of the college Academic Senate, the college’s Accreditation Liaison Officer, and has served on many evaluation teams during her tenure on the Commission. She is currently on the Commission’s Substantive Change Committee.



Dr. Brice W. Harris

Dr. Harris is Chancellor of the Los Rios Community College District. He has participated in a broad array of professional activities concerning higher education in California, including service as chair of several accreditation teams. Dr. Harris is chair of the Commission’s Budget and Personnel Committee.



Dr. E. Jan Kehoe



Dr. Kehoe is Superintendent-President of Long Beach City College. She currently serves on the Commission’s Substantive Change Committee, the Planning and Evaluation Committee, and the Policy Committee. Dr. Kehoe is Vice Chair of the Commission.

Ms. Susan Moses

Ms. Moses is former President of the College of Micronesia-FSM and currently a faculty member at the college. She represents the Pacific Postsecondary Education Council made up of member institutions in the Western Pacific. The College of Micronesia-FSM is located in Kolonia, Pohnpei. Ms. Moses serves on the Substantive Change Committee of the Commission.



Associate Director Appointed

Mr. Garman “Jack” Pond has been appointed to serve as Associate Director for Team Operations and Communication, replacing Darlene Pacheco who is retiring. The Associate Director has primary responsibility for developing and maintaining relations between member institutions and the Commission and serves as primary liaison with self study chairs, accreditation liaison officers and is responsible for coordinating ACCJC publications, including the Newsletter. The Associate Director also is responsible for designing training materials and for conducting training for institutions and teams.



Mr. Pond comes to the Commission staff from Leeward Community College in Pearl City where he has taught for the past 32 years. Mr. Pond has been serving as Acting Dean of Arts and Sciences for the past year.

Mr. Pond’s accreditation experience includes service on many evaluation teams, participation in the college’s self studies, and serving as a faculty representative on the Commission for the past six years (two terms). Mr. Pond holds an AA degree from Santa Ana Jr. College, the BA degree from Redlands University and the MA degree from the University of Hawai‘i. His appointment begins July 1, 2004.

Fall Self Study Workshops

- September 14: Honolulu Community College
- September 15: Honolulu Community College
- September 24: Bakersfield College

Fall Team Training

- September 9: San Francisco Westin Hotel
- September 10: San Francisco Westin Hotel
- September 23: LAX Westin Hotel
- September 24: LAX Westin Hotel

Thoughts as I Retire--Darlene Pacheco

The enclave in which I grew up was populated by families who had moved to northern Colorado from northern New Mexico. They were, by and large, the descendants of families who had become Americans when the United States absorbed lands that had been the frontier lands of Mexico. They spoke a quaint Spanish, practiced a faith laden with syncretism, and were largely uneducated. They were strongly connected by culture and faith and language and they modeled cooperation and support of one another. My grandparents, who reared me after the death of my mother when I was born, did not speak English and were basically illiterate. My grandmother had never gone to school; my grandfather had been to school with an itinerant teacher for a couple of winters. To say the very least, life was difficult for them.

My determination to become an educator was born when I went to first grade (there were no kindergartens available in rural Colorado at that time) and I saw piles of books, chalkboards, teachers who, to my young eyes, knew everything there was to know, and a play store where we “bought” and “sold” wonderful stuff (empty boxes and cans, of course). And to my utter amazement, a room was called “library” with a person in it called “librarian” who read to us and let us look at colorful books filled with amazing marvels. What a wonderful world!

By the middle of winter I could speak passable English and could read “Dick and Jane” with the best of them. Though the life style of these people was strange and their dog and cat had peculiar names, it was wonderfully satisfying to be able to read about them and to be able to print with big, fat pencils on paper lined to keep an unsteady hand in check. I was hooked on books and a life-long passion for reading and learning was born.

My tenure as an educator now spans 49 years. As I reflect on the experiences of these years, I am still excited about what those of us who choose to be educators have by way of opportunity to serve humanity and I still believe that education is the noblest of professions. I have had the chance to know many inspired individuals, dedicated souls whose focus is uplifting the lives of those who come to them in good faith, hoping to better their lives through education. I have had the chance to live in a world of ideas and books and libraries. I have had the chance to give and take in the rough and tumble of academe. Despite the struggles I see facing educators today, I still have hope that we can prevail; that

energetic people committed to education will continue to join our ranks; and that educators will learn to minimize the trivial, focusing their energies on those things that can really make a difference in the life of an institution.

My last seven years with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges have been special because this affiliation has allowed me the opportunity to interact with fellow educators in our region and to “give back” some of what I gained in my 31 years on a community college campus. This experience has persuaded me that, as statements of good practice, the Commission’s standards are indeed a viable means for educators and institutions in this region to become increasingly more effective. This experience has also persuaded me that, despite the critics, accreditation through self-study and peer review is a viable and functional way to assure quality and a means for assisting institutions to improve. What I have come to believe is the sine qua non of institutional improvement through accreditation is a commitment to continuous and conscious institutional self-reflection, not an activity undertaken every six years because a team is coming to visit. Because the standards span all aspects of the life of an institution, they are the means by which the processes, policies, procedures, and, yes, the people can be held up to scrutiny and helped to be better.

My work with the Commission has led me to conclude that institutions characterizing excellence are those where collaboration and collegiality abound and where the primary focus is on serving students. They are institutions where resolution of conflict is marked by mutual respect, a sense of fairness, and an ability to see what might be the greater good. They are institutions where integrity, both personal and institutional, is paramount in the minds of faculty, administrators, staff, and Boards of Trustees. And, they are institutions that value change, having developed the means to access good information and the willingness to communicate about it. They are, in short, institutions willing to learn and willing to support learning.

My work with the Commission has afforded me the opportunity to get to know many of you and I have enjoyed that. I have had the chance to visit your colleges and to grow in my appreciation of the diverse nature of the institutions that populate California and the Western Pacific. Our region is rich in opportunity for those who want to learn. It is rich in opportunity for those who want to help them.

To all of you who populate the member institutions of the ACCJC, I wish you well and I urge you to do good work, to care for your students, and to value the enterprise of education—it is a wonderful world.

Community College Leadership Development Initiative

In 1998 a group of community college leaders became concerned about community college leadership roles throughout the institutions in the region. Among the issues they considered was the lack of educational opportunities for advanced degrees and training for community leaders. They titled their effort the Community College Leadership Development Initiative (CCLDI) and subsequently selected the Claremont Graduate University to serve as the lead institution in designing programs to address community college needs for leadership development.

Claremont Graduate University secured the services of Dr. Martha Romero as Founding Director, CCLDI became a foundation (CCLDIF), and its original name was transferred to the University. Currently, both entities continue the effort to develop the leadership for community colleges. The CCLDI serves the Western United States, including California, Hawaii and the Western Pacific Island community colleges.

The Claremont Graduate University, CCLDI and CCLDIF continue their commitment to engagement in those activities that prepare leaders for work in community colleges and encourage leadership development, research, and access to professional degree programs in community college education. Currently, coordinated efforts can be found in all of these areas as community college scholars and practitioners come together to learn. The CCLDI's web page, its publications, and staff presentations enhance these efforts.

The CCLDI offers a variety of programs, including **The Leadership Fellows Program** in which Leadership Fellows come together for one week to focus on a variety of leadership roles such as understanding behavioral work style differences, planning for transformational leadership, encouraging diversity, managing conflict, and understanding self. The CCLDI also offers **Policy Seminars** designed to provide Leadership Fellows and other community college faculty, staff, and administrators opportunities for exploring significant policy issues with national experts. In addition, the CCLDI also offers a **Doctoral Fellows Program** which brings together doctoral students from participating institutions to discuss research interests, develop a coordinated research agenda and learn about practitioner needs. The CCLDI's newest institute, titled Executive Coaching Service, is intended to provide new and continuing community college presidents with professional support from former community

college presidents who have completed the intensive CCLDI Executive Coaching Workshop.

For detailed information regarding CCLDI, the reader can visit its web site at ccldi@cgu.edu

Update on the Higher Education Reauthorization Act and Accreditation

The ACCJC and five other regional accrediting agencies that are in the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions have been working this year to influence the *accreditation-related* portions of the Congressional bills that will comprise HERA. During much of last year, higher education received information on what would become the "themes" of Congress in considering reform to the reauthorization act: more accountability and transparency of accreditation processes; more information to the public about the results of accreditation; some action to ease student difficulties in transferring credit between institutions; some increased scrutiny of quality assurance of distance education.

Last summer, the ACCJC joined with five other regional accrediting agencies to craft proposed changes to the current law that might address these congressional and public concerns in the most useful way for the public and least onerous way for institutions and accreditors. The six regional accreditors circulated their proposed language to other higher education agencies last fall, and began to use that language to inform congressmen and their staffs. This work is likely to continue through next year because it is now apparent the new HERA will not be completed in this Congress, but will be developed after January 2005. The regional accreditors have, through this experience, established a presence in Washington D.C. and a cohesive organization that will persist beyond HERA.

AAHE/WASC ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges will again partner with AAHE to offer an conference on assessment for Community Colleges September 10-12, 2004. The tentative location is the Hilton Hotel in Glendale. Details will be announced within the next few weeks. Please check the AAHE web site for information-- AAHE.org

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