

ACCJC NEWS

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES,
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Fall 2015

Table of Contents

Accreditation in the News: Reauthorization,
Innovation Experiments, and Student Outcomes

Commissioners and Commission Staff

CEO Survey: How Do You Use and Promote
Accreditation at Your Institution

Changes in Commissioners

2015/2016 Education & Training Schedule

Test Your Knowledge about Institution-Set Standards

Future Comprehensive External Evaluation Visits

ACCJC NEWS

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES,
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Fall 2015

ACCREDITATION IN THE NEWS: REAUTHORIZATION, INNOVATION EXPERIMENTS, AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

SINCE 2013, CONGRESS HAS BEEN taking steps to begin the process for reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, last done in 2008. It has held hearings and commissioned and accepted reports and recommendations on regulation in higher education and on accreditation. As the calendar year winds down this fall, it appears more likely that instead of a comprehensive Higher Education Act released all at once, the legislation will be drafted in smaller pieces that address specific areas of interest and concern.

There are a number of areas in which changes to regulations are being seriously considered:

First, it appears that after a few years of criticism of the existing accreditation system by United States Department of Education (USDE) officials, members of Congress, and journalists, there is a declining interest in severing the link between financial aid and accreditation, or eliminating the role of accreditation in the gatekeeping of access to federal funds. Senator Lamar Alexander (Senate Health, Education, Labor and

Pensions (HELP) Committee Chair) said this summer that neither Congress nor the USDE could provide adequate oversight for higher education quality and improvement, only the accreditors can. Accreditation is likely to remain the gatekeeper for most federal funds in the next reauthorization, even as it develops more flexibility to respond to new initiatives in higher education.

Some have criticized accreditation as a system that inhibits innovation. In fact, there are significant innovations that can be worked through the existing accreditation system and within existing policies of most accreditors. In response to pressure for innovation and experimentation with innovations in higher education practice, the USDE has recently approved two new practices that should provide more access and support greater completion of higher education credentials, and that *can work with the existing accreditation system*.

The first of these, an experiment in Competency Based Education (CBE), was

Accreditation in the News, continued on page 3

Commissioners

DR. STEVEN KINSELLA, CHAIR
Administrative Member

MS. SUSAN KAZAMA, VICE CHAIR
Academic Member (Faculty Representative)

DR. JOSEPH BIELANSKI
Academic Member (Faculty Representative)

DR. KEVIN BONTENBAL
Academic Member (Faculty Representative)

DR. TIMOTHY BROWN
Academic Member (Faculty Representative)

DR. SONYA CHRISTIAN
Administrative Member

MR. CHRIS CONSTANTIN
Public Member

DR. KAROLYN HANNA
Public Member

DR. SHARON LOUCKS
Secondary Education Representative Member

DR. RICHARD MAHON
Academic Member (Faculty Representative)

MR. CHARLES MENG, II
Public Member

DR. JOHN MORTON
University of Hawai'i Community Colleges
Representative Member

DR. MARY OKADA
Pacific Postsecondary Education Council
Representative Member

DR. RAÚL RODRÍGUEZ
Administrative Member

DR. ELEANOR SIEBERT
Four-Year Institutions Representative Member

MR. ERIK SKINNER
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Representative Member

DR. IAN WALTON
Public Member

MR. JOHN ZIMMERMAN
Independent Institutions Representative Member

Commission Staff

DR. BARBARA A. BENO, President

DR. SUSAN B. CLIFFORD, Vice President

DR. KRISTA JOHNS, Vice President

MR. GARMAN JACK POND, Vice President

DR. NORVAL WELLSFRY, Associate Vice President

MS. MINDY GRAHAM, Events Coordinator and Administrative Support

MR. TOM LANE, Administrative Support

MS. CHERI M. SIXBEY, Executive Assistant to the President and Business Officer

MS. ALEXANDRA SPRING, Project Manager

ACCJC NEWS is published by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC).

Publication Address:

10 Commercial Blvd., Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949

Phone: 415-506-0234 ♦ E-Mail: accjc@accjc.org ♦ website: www.accjc.org

announced this summer when several pilot institutions were identified, and a second pilot phase will be announced in the coming weeks. In CBE, students who complete programs have to demonstrate mastery of the required competencies and knowledge, but may learn these competencies, and receive financial aid for their learning, in periods other than the traditional semester or quarter. That is, outcomes are held constant, and time to degree is variable. For this project, the USDE worked with regional accreditors to conceive how they might assure quality of institutions offering CBE degrees, and the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions has adopted a common approach to evaluating such programs.



The USDE has just announced another experimental program in which students attending non-institutional providers of education or learning certification systems (e.g., MOOCs, “boot camps”), that contract and partner with accredited institutions, will be eligible for federal student aid. This experiment is accepting non-traditional provider-institution partnerships. As with the

CBE experiment, the regional accreditors are working together and with the USDE to develop criteria for evaluating such partnerships. This experiment has just been announced (see Federal Register for October 15, 2015).

Second, there is an interest in possibly reducing the federal regulation of accreditors, particularly in some of the areas of 34 CFR Section 602, the main regulations that define the criteria for accreditors to be recognized by the federal government. There is also an interest in listening to accreditors’ requests that the regulatory requirements for Substantive Change, which have become very burdensome, be reduced.

Third, the USDE, and the news media, have increased their focus on so-called “substandard” institutions and on concerns about whether accreditation is adequate to detect and prevent institutional financial or educational failures, and to protect federal funds and taxpayers. This issue is often discussed in overly simplistic terms, to the detriment of true understanding of policy makers and the public.

The case of Corinthian Colleges, wherein slowing of federal reimbursement of student aid funds to the institution led to significant financial crisis and ultimate closure of the institution, still resonates. News media are still tracking the federal databases that provide information about institutions with high loan default rates, and low graduation rates. This is worrisome. The policy makers prefer simple metrics. In community colleges, we know Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data and the use of metrics based on “first time-full time freshman” are

not sound measures of the success of community college students or the quality of community colleges. Nonetheless, there is an increasing likelihood that the next Higher Education Act, or USDE regulations, will ask accreditors to do more – for example, demonstrate greater monitoring of institutions with high loan default or low graduation rates, or even set bright lines for quality based on such metrics.

Fourth, there is an increased interest in asking accreditors to do more to examine “student learning”, particularly the learning outcomes of programs. There is a good deal of interest in demonstrating the value of higher education, or the return on investment to students and the public. Congress is interested in legislation that will provide students and the public with more information about the learning and competencies of program completers.

Fifth, Congress sees the job of accreditors as providing accountability and transparency to the public. It is interested in providing more information to the public about the accreditation process – the accreditation decision on each institution, the evaluation reports or summaries of their findings, and the strengths and weaknesses of institutions as represented in those reports.

A long article about accreditation by Doug Lederman of Inside Higher Education, September 1, 2015, entitled “No Love, But No Alternative,” provides a solid discussion of the historical relationship between our peer review system – accreditation – and federal law and regulation. It also covers the changing role of accreditation as it has been pushed increasingly toward a compliance orientation by federal

regulations. The next Higher Education Act promises to push accreditors toward holding institutions more accountable for student outcomes, and also may ease up on the over-regulation of the institutional processes that are used to provide education. When will an Act be completed? Likely, not before 2017. Stay tuned, with a brief pause for the national presidential election. ♦

CEO Survey: How Do You Use and Promote Accreditation at Your Institution

CEOs of member institutions were surveyed in September 2015 about how accreditation is used and promoted in the region. Fifty-six respondents provided information about:

- ❖ Activities of the college for which the subject of accreditation is a regular component;
- ❖ How often they link discussions about effective practices at the institution to Accreditation Standards and meeting expectations in higher education;
- ❖ Expectations the CEOs have for leaders at their institutions, related to accreditation;
- ❖ Identifying individuals for service on accreditation evaluation teams; and
- ❖ How they, as CEO, promote the value of accreditation to their college and community.

Among some of the interesting responses:

One respondent's institution has a standing accreditation steering committee, website, and dedicated staff to support ongoing efforts throughout the college.

66% of the CEOs reported their practice of linking college discussions about effective practices in which they participate to the Accreditation Standards and meeting expectations in higher education. 4% of the CEOs indicated they rarely did this.

One CEO has a weekly or bi-weekly newsletter; in that newsletter, the value of accreditation to the college and community are promoted.

Another CEO facilitates meetings related to student success and institutional effectiveness at the college which include discussion of the value of accreditation.

91% of respondents expected other leaders at the institution to engage in conversation about how the Accreditation Standards are applied to particular institutional practices.

One CEO expects the institutional leaders to maintain an evidence database for accreditation.

53 (95%) of the CEOs identify and encourage individuals at their institutions to volunteer for service on accreditation teams, and support their participation by approving substitutes for them at work, if needed.

One respondent reported: "I hold myself accountable to be engaged and apprised of current conversations concerning both state and national accreditation issues. When possible, I volunteer to lead accreditation teams. It is also my responsibility to engage and inform our governing board, foundation board, and the general public on these matters."

To see a presentation of the full survey results, please visit:

http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CEO_Survey_Results_Slides_10_21_2015.pdf

Changes in Commissioners

COMMISSIONERS WHO COMPLETED THEIR SERVICE IN OCTOBER 2015

Dr. Sherrill L. Amador – Dr. Amador has served on the Commission since 2004 (including her time as Chair and Chair Emeritus) as a Public Member. Dr. Amador served as a member of the Policy Committee, chair of the Evaluation and Planning Committee, member of the Budget and Personnel Committee, chair and member of the Substantive Change Committee, member of the WASC Senior College and University Commission Board of Directors, the ACCJC Audit Committee, and was the ACCJC Commission Chair from 2012 to 2014.

Dr. Frank Gornick – Dr. Gornick has served on the Commission since 2009 as an Administrative Member. Dr. Gornick served as the chair of the Budget and Personnel Committee, the Eligibility Committee, vice chair of the Standards Review Committee, and as member of the Policy Committee, the Commissioner Nomination Committee, the ad hoc Committee on Communications, and the WASC Senior College and University Commission Board of Directors.

Ms. Virginia May – Ms. May has served on the Commission since 2009 as an Academic Member (Faculty Representative). Ms. May served as a member of the Policy Committee, the ad hoc Committee on Communications, the Evaluation and Planning Committee, the Budget and Personnel Committee, the Lumina Grant Advising Committee, and the ad hoc Committee on General Education.



NEW COMMISSIONERS ELECTED (TERM BEGINNING NOVEMBER 1, 2015)

In May of 2015, the ACCJC Member Institution CEOs elected the following individuals to serve on the Commission:

Dr. Kevin Bontenbal – Dr. Bontenbal was elected to serve on the Commission as an Academic Member (Faculty Representative). He holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of California at Santa Barbara, a Certificate in Online Teaching from the University of California at Los Angeles, a Master of Library Sciences degree from Syracuse University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from California State University, Chico. Dr. Bontenbal is the Instructional Technology Librarian at Cuesta College, a position he has held since 1997. He provides librarian services to students, assists faculty in incorporating electronic resources into their teaching, and teaches classes for students on a variety of library related topics. He has served as President of the Academic Senate from July 2011 to the present. Dr. Bontenbal formerly served as the South Representative to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, and in several other capacities with the Senate. He has served on five accreditation evaluation teams, and as faculty co-chair for Cuesta College's self-evaluation report.



Changes in Commissioners, continued on page 7



Dr. Sonya Christian – Dr. Christian was elected to serve on the Commission as an Administrative Member. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of California, Los Angeles, a Master of Science in Applied Mathematics from the University of Southern California, and a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from the University of Kerala. Dr. Christian is the President of Bakersfield College. She served as Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at Lane Community College in Oregon from 2012, and prior to that as Vice President for Academic Affairs, Associate Vice President for Instruction, and Dean of Science at Lane. She began her academic career at Bakersfield College as a faculty member, division chair, and then academic Dean. Dr. Christian served as an evaluation team member for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities from 2004 to 2012, and has served on two ACCJC evaluation teams since 2014, one as chair.

Dr. Karolyn Hanna – Dr. Hanna was elected to serve on the Commission as a Public Member. She holds a Ph.D. in Education from the University of California at Santa Barbara, a Master of Science in Nursing from CSU Dominguez Hills, a Master of Science in Guidance from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Mankato State University in Minnesota. Dr. Hanna is a registered nurse and retired nurse educator. She has served as a site visitor and chair of site visit teams to Associate Degree Nursing programs across the United States for the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC), as well as a member of the NLNAC Evaluation Review Panel. Prior to retirement, Dr. Hanna was a Professor of Nursing at Santa Barbara City College for thirty years. She was active in campus governance, served two terms as President of the SBCC Academic Senate and worked on the College’s accreditation self-evaluation report.



COMMISSIONERS RE-ELECTED (TERM BEGINNING JULY 1, 2015)

In May of 2015, the ACCJC Member Institution CEOs re-elected the following individual to serve on the Commission:

Dr. Richard Mahon – Dr. Mahon, Academic Member (Faculty Representative), was elected to serve a second term on the Commission. ♦

2015/2016 Education & Training Schedule

ACCJC is hosting or participating in the following events. Updates and additions to the education and training schedule will be made available on the ACCJC website www.accjc.org.

2015-2016 Self Evaluation Workshops

- October 16, 2015
- October 23, 2015
- November 6, 2015
- Spring 2016, TBD

Intended Audience: by invitation, for colleges scheduled for review in 2017



2015-2016 Team Evaluator Trainings

- September 1, 2015
- September 2, 2015
- January 26, 2016
- January 27, 2016

Intended Audience: by invitation, for individuals serving on 2015/2016 evaluation teams

Financial Health, Analyzing College Finances

ACBO Fall 2015 Conference – October 26-27, 2015 – Redondo Beach, CA

A panel presentation with the ACCJC, FCMAT, and the California Community College Chancellor's Office on factors used to analyze the financial health of colleges.

Intended Audience: Chief Business Officers

New Standards and New Processes – The Evolution of Accreditation

ACBO Fall 2015 Conference – October 26-27, 2015 – Redondo Beach, CA

Presentation on administrative perspectives and leadership in accreditation. Briefing on new Standards and new Processes to focus on quality improvement in colleges.

Intended Audience: Chief Business Officers

New Accreditation Standards and Practices: Focus on Quality Improvement

Community College League of California Conference – November 19-21, 2015 – Burlingame, CA

An interactive presentation that will review the 2015 standards and practices with special emphases on what has changed, and on the enhanced focus on institutional quality improvement. The quality focus essay (QFE), new Commission accreditation actions, and the use of data and analyses on student achievement and learning outcomes will be discussed.

Intended Audience: all welcome

Education & Training Schedule, *continued on page 9*

New Standards and New Processes – The Evolution of Accreditation

ACCCA Annual Conference – February 17-19, 2016 – Riverside, CA

Presentation on administrative perspectives and leadership in accreditation. Briefing on new Standards and new Processes to focus on quality improvement in colleges.

Intended Audience: college administrators

New Evaluator Training

February 26, 2016 – Los Angeles, CA

Welcome prospective evaluators. This training is designed as an intensive introduction to the team evaluation process. Principles and methodology of team evaluator work will be discussed in an interactive format to help prepare effective team evaluators.

Intended Audience: prospective team evaluators

* Registration information and training details will be announced on the ACCJC website

Best Practices Workshop: Taking Assessment to the Program Level

March 1, 2016 – Los Angeles, CA also offered on
March 3, 2016 – Burlingame, CA

Presenter: Linda Suskie, nationally known author and consultant

An interactive workshop that takes assessment of course learning outcomes to the next level: program learning outcomes. Attendees will work in groups from different colleges discussing and applying principles presented to case studies and to programs at their own institutions.

Intended Audience: faculty, deans, department chairs and program leaders

* Registration information and training details will be announced on the ACCJC website

Best Practices Workshop: Fundamentals of Assessment

April 15, 2016 – Burlingame, CA

Presenter: Dr. Amy Driscoll, Associate Senior Scholar, Carnegie Foundation

An intensive workshop to help college faculty develop clear and concise student learning outcomes, design and use both direct and indirect assessment, and align pedagogy and curriculum with learning outcomes in courses, programs, and at an institutional level.

Intended Audience: newly hired faculty, faculty and administrators with responsibility for assessment

* Registration information and training details will be announced on the ACCJC website ♦

Test Your Knowledge about Institution-Set Standards

True/False

1. Institution-set standards come from the Higher Education Act and from federal regulations.
2. The concept of institution-set standards for student achievement has been around since 1965.
3. The questions in the 2014 and 2015 Annual Reports contain the components of institution-set standards that ACCJC will evaluate in institutional reviews.
4. Institutions are required to have institution-set standards across all data elements it uses in institutional self evaluation and continuous improvement.
5. Institution-set standards provide a means for institutions to evaluate success with respect to student achievement, at both the institutional and programmatic levels.

Turn upside down for answers below.

Answers

1. True. Institution-set standards come out of the requirement that accreditors evaluate the quality of the institution as to success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission. The evaluation of student achievement performance may include different standards for different programs, as established by the institution, and will include, among others: course completion, job placement rates, and state licensing examination results as appropriate. HEA Section 496, 20 U.S.C. 1099B, 34 C.F.R. § 602.16(1)(i). See also 34 C.F.R. § 602.17 (a)(2).
2. False. This concept was not a part of the Higher Education Act enacted in 1965. USDE regulatory language underwent changes in 2010 and 2011 following revisions to the HEA. Among the changes was the concept of having different standards for different programs, established by the institution, related to evaluation of success with respect to student achievement. The USDE Accreditation Group staff briefed accreditors on their interpretation of these new requirements in fall 2012, and in response, the ACCJC sent a notification to the field in January 2013.
3. False. Accreditation Standards I.A. and I.B. express the expectation that the institution will establish institution-set standards for student achievement which are reflective of the full mission and intended student body. The ACCJC Annual Report and Annual Fiscal Report request certain information from member institutions, but they do not include every component contained in the Accreditation Standards. Under federal regulations (34 C.F.R. § 602.19(b)), accreditors are required to request periodic reports and collect and analyze key data and indicators which include fiscal information and measures of student achievement. The method of collecting and analyzing data must trigger follow-up by the accreditor for ensuring Accreditation Standards are being met. The ACCJC has identified three key data areas for monitoring related to institution-set standards in the Annual Report. They include course completion (institution-wide), job placement rates, and licensure/examination passage rates. The institution's self evaluation and continuous improvement process, and external team evaluations, will look at the broader configuration of institution-set standards, and disaggregated results to facilitate improvement efforts.
4. False. While an institution should have institution-set standards reflective of its full mission and the students it serves, there is no expectation that institutions will have institution-set standards for every data element it analyzes during ongoing operations, program review, or institution-wide planning. Institutions evaluate all kinds of demographic, environmental, and operational data as a part of their ongoing performance analysis. Not all of these data pertain directly to student success, and others might not be determined by the institution to be key indicators for evaluation purposes. The ACCJC's *Guide to Evaluating and Improving Institutions* identifies numerous areas of demographic and performance data which should be included in the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). Some of this data is collected and analyzed in the Annual Report, without being linked to specific institution-set standards.
5. True. The institution-set standards provide definitions for the institution's goals and objectives which specifically pertain to student achievement results. The institution will have additional goals related to operations, and will also be deeply involved in the assessment and support of student learning. Together, these will provide key information to the institution related to academic quality and institutional effectiveness as the context for examining its practices and processes.

Future Comprehensive External Evaluation Visits

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding the institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo comprehensive external evaluation visits in the spring of 2016, the fall of 2016, and the spring of 2017, and review by the Commission at its June 2016, January 2017, and June 2017 meetings, respectively. Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to the ACCJC President, Dr. Barbara A. Beno, at 10 Commercial Blvd. Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. For consideration, such comments must be made in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting. This information is also available on the Future Comprehensive External Evaluation Visits page of ACCJC's website www.accjc.org.

SPRING 2016 *

(for June 2016 Commission Review)

College of Micronesia-FSM
 College of the Siskiyous
 East Los Angeles College
 Los Angeles City College
 Los Angeles Harbor College
 Los Angeles Mission College
 Los Angeles Pierce College
 Los Angeles Southwest College
 Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
 Los Angeles Valley College
 Palau Community College
 West Los Angeles College

* Using the 2014 Standards

FALL 2016 *

(for January 2017 Commission Review)

Allan Hancock College
 Antelope Valley College
 Chaffey College
 City College of San Francisco
 Evergreen Valley College
 Glendale Community College
 MiraCosta College
 Monterey Peninsula College
 Moorpark College
 Oxnard College
 San Jose City College
 Santa Monica College
 Ventura College

* Using the 2014 Standards

SPRING 2017 *

(for June 2017 Commission Review)

College of Marin
 Deep Springs College
 El Camino College Compton Center
 Irvine Valley College
 Merced College
 Mt. San Antonio College
 Saddleback College
 San Diego City College
 San Diego Mesa College
 San Diego Miramar College
 Victor Valley College
 West Hills College Coalinga
 West Hills College Lemoore

* Using the 2014 Standards





ACCREDITING COMMISSION
for **COMMUNITY** and
JUNIOR COLLEGES

10 Commercial Blvd., Suite 204
Novato, CA 94949

NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #161
SANTA ROSA, CA

