

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

Policy on Access to Commission Meetings

(Adopted June 1978; Revised January 2000; Edited June 2005; Revised January 2006; Edited August 2012, April 2013; Revised October 2013, January 2014, January 2015)

The Commission holds its meeting for two purposes: to decide the accredited status of applicant and member institutions and to consider informational and policy matters as may come before it. The Commission meets in Public Session when deliberating or acting upon informational or policy matters. When deliberating or acting upon matters that concern specific individuals or the accredited status of institutions, the Commission meets in Closed Session to ensure the confidentiality of those matters, that decisions are based on facts presented in accordance with accreditation procedures, and to ensure decisions are not improperly influenced.

The Commission holds public sessions to share information with the field and to provide transparency to the public. The Commission supports and encourages the presence of members of the public at its Public Sessions. Seating, though limited, is made available for members of the public at each meeting.

Public Sessions of the Commission Meeting

The President sends a preliminary agenda of the public session approximately 45 days before each regular meeting of the Commission to the Chief Executive Officer and Accreditation Liaison Officer of all applicant, candidate, and accredited institutions with the request that the agenda be posted or otherwise publicized. The public session agenda is also posted on the Commission web page in advance of the meeting.

Observers will be seated at the public sessions of Commission meetings as space allows. Anyone wishing to make a presentation or address the Commission must give advance notice to the President as outlined below and identify the agenda item that they wish to address. No reference to specific individuals or institutions shall be made in Public Session.

Participation by observers at Commission meetings is limited to the following:

- A. Statements which address the Commission's agenda and which have been noted by the President in the agenda at the appropriate places.** A written copy of all prepared remarks should be given to the President prior to the presentation. Requests to make statements should be made to the President, in writing, not less than 15 days before the Commission meeting.
- B. Requests to bring items to the attention of the Commission.** Such requests should be made to the President, in writing, not less than 15 days before the Commission meeting.
- C. Brief comments on specific points in the Public Session agenda.** These may be made at the end of the Commission discussion of the same topic upon recognition from the Chair. The Chair may invite participation at other times at his/her discretion.

- D. Public comment period.** Public Session agendas will include a fifteen minute period for public comment, generally at the beginning of the meeting. Individuals wishing to make public comment will be asked to register and to cite the subject of their comments.

Observers' statements shall be limited to five minutes or less, but may be extended at the discretion of the Chair or vote of the Commission.

Closed Sessions of the Commission

- A.** When the Commission is deliberating or acting upon matters that concern an institution, it will invite the Chief Executive Officer of the institution to meet with the Commission in Closed Session. There is no requirement that the Chief Executive Officer attend the Commission meeting. If the Commission is considering institutional action as a result of an evaluation team visit and the Chief Executive Officer of the institution accepts the invitation to attend, the evaluation team chair or designee is also invited to attend.

The institutional representative will be invited to make a brief presentation followed by questions by Commissioners. The amount of time for presentations will generally be limited to five minutes per institution. The Commission reserves the right to establish a different time limit on and procedures for such presentations. If the institution wants to bring written material to the Commission's attention it must be submitted to the Commission no less than 15 days before the meeting. No additional materials will be accepted by the Commission after that time, including at the meeting during the presentation of oral comments. After the institutional representative is excused the team chair or designee will be asked to respond to Commission questions. The team chair or designee is then excused, and the Commission deliberations and decision are conducted in Closed Session.

- B.** When the Commission is deliberating or acting upon matters that concern specific individuals, the Commission meets in Closed Session. Requests to meet with members of the Commission about matters that concern specific individuals should be made to the President, in writing, not less than 15 days before the Commission meeting. Whenever possible, the President will arrange for a subcommittee of Commissioners to meet with the individuals preceding the Closed Session of the Commission to discuss the matters of concern. These Commissioners will report to the Commission as a whole and may recommend a presentation before the full Commission at an appropriate time.