

March 24, 2017

To: Chancellors, Superintendents, Presidents, Accreditation Liaison Officers, and Other Interested Parties

CC: Commissioners

From: Stephanie Droker, Vice President

Subject: Revision to the Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions
– Invitation to Field for Comment

In special circumstances and according to its bylaws, the Commission may take action on a policy outside of a regularly scheduled commission meeting. At the Commission Development Workshop last week, the Commission voted for first-read to revise the Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions by adding an action to reaffirm accreditation for seven years and require a Follow-Up Report.

Background

In June 2015, the Commission approved revised policy language that defined two possible actions to reaffirm accreditation for institutions:

Reaffirm Accreditation: The institution is in compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (together Commission's Standards). The institution is required to submit a Midterm Report midway through the seven-year accreditation cycle.

Reaffirm Accreditation and Require a Follow-Up Report: The institution is in substantial compliance with Commission's Standards. The institution is required to submit a Follow-Up Report demonstrating that it has resolved all cited deficiencies. The Commission will specify the issues to be addressed and the due date of the report, with or without an external evaluation team visit. The period for reaffirmation with a Follow-Up Report may be up to 18 months, but generally will be one year. Upon successful completion of the reaffirmation with a Follow-Up Report period, the institution will qualify for reaffirmation for the remainder of the seven-year accreditation cycle and will be required to submit a Midterm Report midway through the seven-year accreditation cycle.

The second action, Reaffirm Accreditation and Require a Follow-Up Report (18 month reaffirmation), was added to allow the Commission to reaffirm accreditation for a limited time in order to provide an institution up to 18 months¹ to correct deficiencies in that period. If an institution came into compliance within that period, it would have its accreditation reaffirmed for

¹ 18 month time frame was determined in order to comply with the two-year rule federal requirement that institutions must resolve any and all deficiencies within two years.

the remainder of the seven-year cycle of accreditation. The Commission revised the policy in response to feedback from the field that requested adequate time for an institution to respond to findings of non-compliance before any sanction would be imposed on an institution.

In practice, the 18 month reaffirmation decision substantially reduced the need to apply sanctions and provided institutions time to resolve issues where they did not meet standards. However, it was also used for all cases where any deficiency was found no matter the number of deficiencies or the seriousness of those deficiencies. Thus, all institutions needing to complete Follow-Up Reports could only be reaffirmed accreditation for 18 months.

Policy Revision

An intermediate action was added to the Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions to allow for institutions to be reaffirmed for the full seven-year cycle with a Follow-Up Report. This action will be applied to institutions that continue to demonstrate compliance with Commission's Standards, but have some minor deficiencies that are easily corrected. The institution will be required to submit a Follow-Up Report demonstrating it has come into compliance. Additionally, the policy language was amended to provide clearer distinction between the Commission actions. To view the policy changes, please see attached.

Comments from the Field

The policy has been reviewed as a first-read by the Commission. The ACCJC invites comments from the field. Therefore, we request that you publicize the information in this memo at your institution. Comments may be submitted by May 1, 2017 by completing the Comments on Policy Form at www.accjc.org, or by email to accjc@accjc.org. All comments will be submitted for review by the ACCJC's Policy Committee. The committee will incorporate any changes into the policy, which will then be presented to the Commission for a second-reading and action at the June commission meeting. If the Commission adopts the policy at that time, it can be applicable to institutional decisions being made during the June session.