



ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Standards Review



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Progress Update – July 2022

Dear Colleagues,

Last summer the ACCJC Accreditation Standards Review process officially launched and great progress has been made towards developing the draft Standards. Beginning in August 2021, the Peer Writing Teams convened and worked through the fall to prepare their initial drafts for each content area: *Leadership and Governance, Academic Programs, Student Services and Supports, Mission, Purpose, and Goals, Infrastructure and Resources*. The process hit a major milestone in December, as the Peer Writing Teams delivered initial draft standards and suggested review criteria to the Standards Review Leadership Team for their input. Together, the leadership team, co-leads, and writing team members refined the drafts.

Peer Reading Teams met in March to read and reflect on draft standards in the five distinct content areas. These teams provided feedback related to clarity, usability, and whether the standards spoke specifically to equity and success, in keeping with the Commission's *Policy on Social Justice*. Drafts from the five content areas are being synthesized for review by the Standards Review Leadership Team, which will make final adjustments this summer.

The first draft will be presented to the field for dialogue and input in fall 2022! ACCJC anticipates there will be many opportunities for the field to participate in that dialogue and announcements and instructions for participation will be shared widely when available.

ACCJC would like to recognize the thoughtful, dedicated, and engaged participation of the Standards Review Leadership Team, Co-Leads, and the Peer Writing and Reading Team Members. Everyone is looking forward to presenting the draft to the field this fall. On the next page, please find an overview of the process and anticipated improvements and the plan for what's to come.

If you have not already done so, consider subscribing directly to *ACCJC Connect* and other ACCJC news and updates. [Click here to subscribe.](#)

Standards Review

Goal: To develop Standards that all ACCJC member institutions can use as a meaningful and effective framework for fostering institutional excellence and equitable student success.

Guiding Principles for New Standards

- Balance accountability and improvement
- Use clear language and minimize redundancy
- Reflect the diversity of ACCJC’s membership
- Strong emphasis on equity and inclusion
- Focus on outcomes and improvement rather than processes
- Support a systems approach to institutional evaluation
- Grounded in broader norms for higher education



Anticipated Structural Improvements

- Simpler and tighter structure
 - Streamlined and reorganized, resulting in fewer narrative responses
- Less redundancy
 - Concepts/processes contextualized within each standard
 - Shifts away from demonstrating how processes are developed
 - Emphasizes how the outcomes of a process are used to innovate and improve
- Clear criteria for review
 - Builds consistent understanding of standards for institutions and reviewers
 - Can be adjusted more easily than standards themselves, if/when needed
 - Opens possibility that a narrative may not be required for every standard

Peer Writing Team Process

- Five Writing Teams, working in parallel
 - Each team’s process emerged organically, and were roughly parallel
 - All teams used the same reference materials
- Commonalities in Approach:
 - Approached Standards as policy statements
 - Strived for clear, streamlined language
 - Emphasis on equity and inclusion
 - Grounded in institutional mission
 - Focus on outcomes rather than processes
 - Shifting to “checklists” if/where appropriate
 - Identified need for a glossary of terms



Peer Reading Team Charge and Process

Charge: “Provide input in order to refine and test”

- Honor Peer Writing Team’s work while making suggestions to improve clarity and usability

Process: Read, Reflect, and Refine (2 rounds)

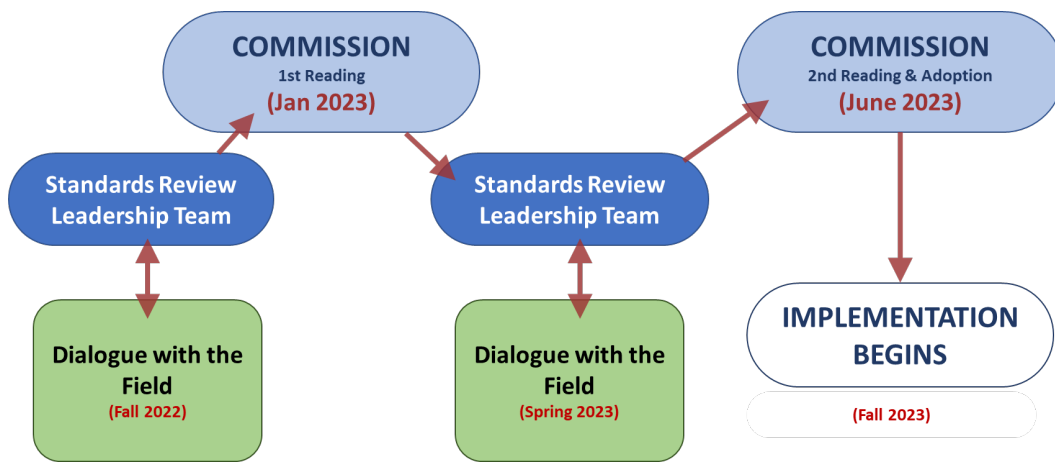
- Read the draft and respond to specific reflection questions via a survey
- Co-Leads will collate suggestions and incorporate into the draft
- Maintain confidentiality to allow space for rethinking and emerging ideas

Resources: Reference Materials in Microsoft Teams

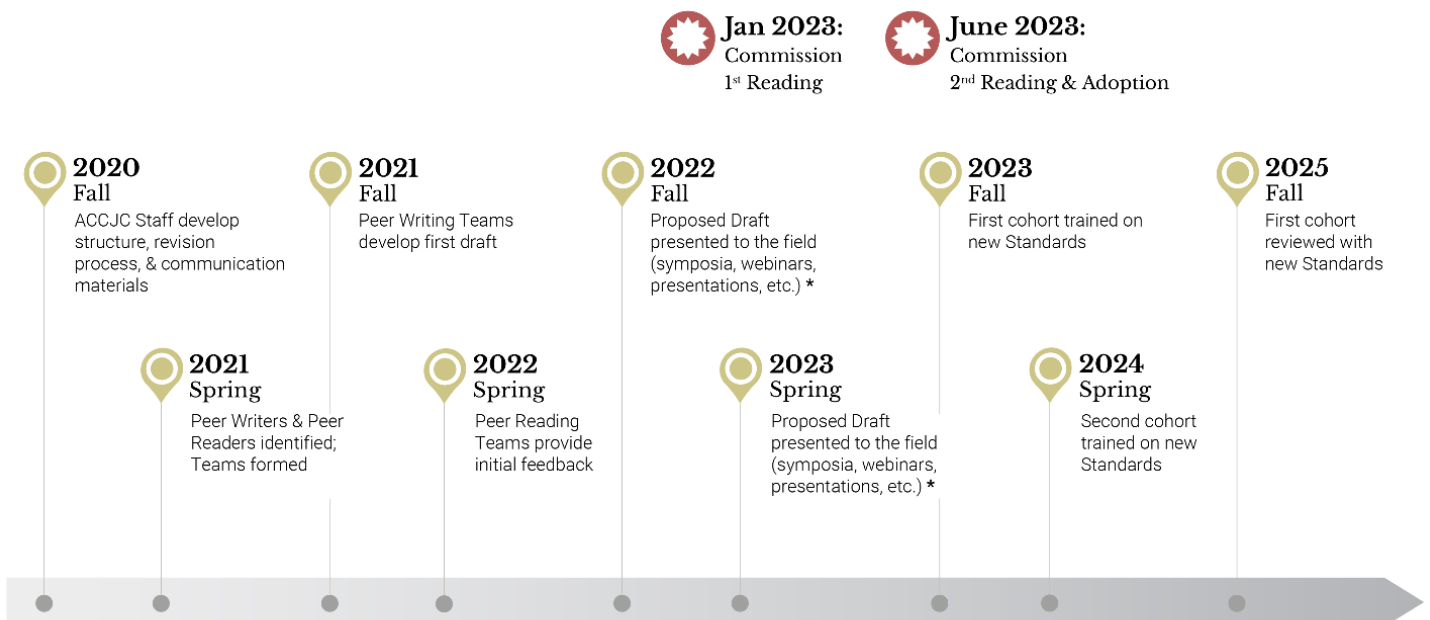
- Context and perspective from peer agencies
- Guiding Principles and Grounding Questions

What’s Next

Dialogue and Approval Process



The ACCJC Standards Review remains on track with the **tentative timeline below**. Stay tuned to the [ACCJC Standards Review website](#) for updates and opportunities for participation!



* Feedback from the field incorporated as appropriate for inclusion in subsequent draft.