

Date: November 23, 2021

To: Commission and Other Interested Parties

From: Barbara Dunsheath, Policy Committee Chair
Gohar Momjian, ACCJC Vice President

Subject: Policy Changes for Consideration - January 2022 Commission Meeting

The Policy Committee oversees the development of new policies and changes to existing policies. The Policy Committee's work is guided by the *Policy on Commission Practices on Policy Review*.

Commission procedures generally provide that proposed institutional policy revisions and/or new policies be considered by the Commission in a two-meeting process. At the first meeting, new policies/policy changes are discussed, and modifications are made as appropriate (first reading). These policies are then circulated to ACCJC's member institutions and other interested parties for review and comment before presentation at the next scheduled Commission meeting for second reading and adoption.

When revisions are needed in order to align with federal regulations, or for other extenuating circumstances, policy changes can be made by the Commission outside the normal two-meeting process. If these revisions are made by Commission action between regularly scheduled meetings, the changes are communicated to the field, including the reason for immediate action by the Commission.

In addition, the Policy Committee may make edits to policies intended to clarify issues or correct technical issues of language and grammar. The Policy Committee shall notify the Commission of such edits by including a summary of them in its public Policy Memo to the Commission during its regular meeting.

Items for Second Reading

The Policy Committee moved to forward the following policies to the Commission for its Second Read.

- i. **Revision: Policy on Preaccreditation** (*previously titled Policy on Eligibility to Apply for Accredited Status*)
The proposed revisions include renaming the policy to *Policy on Preaccreditation*; clarifying the policy elements for institutions seeking Eligibility and Candidacy; incorporating new policy elements that align with recently changed federal regulations; and removing procedural descriptions on the steps to attaining eligibility which are contained in ACCJC's manuals. There are no changes since the Commission's first read.

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ii. **Revision: Eligibility Requirements for Accreditation**

Proposed revisions are limited to the introductory narrative and provides a more concise description of the Eligibility Requirements, align with the changes proposed in the *Policy on Eligibility to Apply for Accredited Status*, and removes procedural narrative on the steps to attain Candidacy. There are no changes to the Eligibility Requirements. There are no changes since the Commission's first read.

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iii. **Revision: Policy on Institutional Advertising and Student Recruitment** (*previously titled Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment and Representation of Accredited Status*)

Proposed revisions include renaming the policy to *Policy on Institutional Advertising and Student Recruitment*. Language related to representation of accredited status is moved and incorporated into the *Policy on Representation of Accredited Status*. There are no changes since the Commission's first read.

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iv. **Revision: Policy on Representation of Accredited Status**

Proposed revisions and statements of accreditation align more accurately to the definitions of Eligibility and Candidacy. Policy elements address the parameters for an institution to describe its accredited status. There are no changes since the Commission's first read.

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v. **Revision: Policy on Credit Hour, Clock Hour, and Academic Year** (*previously titled Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits*)

The recommended policy revisions conform to forthcoming changes in the definitions of the credit hour and clock hour in federal regulations, which provide greater flexibility to colleges in their approach to understanding student work and engagement. Since the Commission's first read, regulatory references were replaced with lay language to introduce the conversion formula.

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Items for First Reading

The Policy Committee moved to forward the following policies to the Commission for its First Read.

i. **Revision: Policy Regarding Matters on Litigation**

Proposed revisions clarify that colleges should only report pending litigation to ACCJC when such litigation may potentially impact the institution's ability to meet Standards or

impact the integrity of the review process. Language strengthens the advisement to teams to not comment on pending litigation.

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Items for Deletion

The Policy Committee moved to forward the following policies to the Commission for deletion.

- i. **Delete: [Policy on Institutions with Related Entities](#)**
The policy has outlived its usefulness and is duplicative of the Commission's Policy on Substantive Change and associated procedures which provide guidance to institutions undergoing change in ownership and required evidentiary material.
- ii. **Delete: [Policy on Refund of Student Charges](#)**
The policy has outlived its usefulness with references to 1976 federal requirements and is proposed for deletion. Current ACCJC Eligibility Requirement 20, Accreditation Standard I.C.2, and *Policy on Institutional Advertising and Student Recruitment* address disclosure requirements related to student fees, financial obligations, and refunds of fees.

Notification to the Commission on Edits Approved by the Policy Committee (not action items)

Per the *Policy on Commission Practices on Policy Review*, the Policy Committee reviewed and approved the following edits to make corrections, improve readability and clarity of Commission policies, and to align policy language with the Commission's mission and values. The following policy edits will go into effect immediately after the Commission meeting.

- a. **Edits: Policy on Public Disclosure and Confidentiality in the Accreditation Process**
The edits correct a clause which should have previously been deleted to provide internal consistency within the policy and conformity with current federal regulations (see Part A. Sections II and III). Deleting the clause clarifies that the public disclosure notice is posted when the Commission takes an adverse action. Further, per federal regulations, language was added to provide transparency to institutions that teach-out plans and/or agreements must be disclosed to the public. Other edits replace the term 'termination' with 'withdrawal' making language consistent with the *Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions*. Citations to regulations were moved from parenthetical clauses to footnotes to aid in reading the policy.

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- b. **Edits: Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions**

The edits clarify that colleges must notify the public about third party comments six months prior to the focused site visit. This clarification was necessary considering the new formative summative model of comprehensive review.

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c. Edits: Substantive Change

The edits clarify that institutions may not submit a substantive change application in the six-month period preceding a focused site visit. This clarification was necessary considering the new formative summative model of comprehensive review. Citations were corrected and language was modified to reflect ACCJC's current approach to comprehensive review.

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d. Edits: Statement on the Benefit of Accreditation

The edits add descriptive language that better reflects ACCJC's mission and values; replaces reference to 'regional' accrediting commission with 'institutional' per federal regulations; and adds reference to social justice as a core value of higher education.

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e. Edits: Policy on Transfer of Credit

The edits replace reference to 'regional' accrediting commission with 'institutional' per federal regulations; moves existing language to emphasize institutional flexibility to support students; and adds footnotes with relevant citations to federal regulations.

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f. Edits: Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV

The edits add footnotes with relevant citations to federal regulations.

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g. Edits: Policy on the Role of Accreditation Liaison Officers

The edits reflect ACCJC's current approach to comprehensive review replacing evaluation team with peer review team, and including reference to the Vice Chair role on the team per the formative summative model of comprehensive review.

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h. Review: Policy on Governing Boards for Military Institutions

There are no changes to this policy; the review date is updated.

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