Date: May 26, 2021

To: Commission and Other Interested Parties

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

Subject: Policy Changes for Consideration - June 2021 Commission Meeting

The Policy Committee oversees the development of new policies and changes to existing policies. Commission procedures generally provide that proposed policy changes and/or new policies be considered by the Commission in a two-meeting process. At the first meeting, policy changes and/or new policies are discussed, and modifications are made as appropriate (first reading). These policies are then widely 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 changes 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 changes 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.

**Items for Second Reading**

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

i. **Revision: Policy on Social Justice** *(previously titled Policy Statement on Diversity)*

The proposed policy replaces the 1994 *Policy Statement on Diversity* and strongly affirms the Commission’s commitment to social justice by implementing actions for increasing equity, diversity, and inclusion in ACCJC’s operations. Headings delineate policy applicability to the Commission, Representatives of the Commission, and Member Institutions. The policy specifies the Accreditation Standards that require institutions to ground their work in equity, diversity, and inclusion. There are no changes since the First Read.

ii. **Revision: Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions**

The proposed policy revisions conform to the changes and parameters set in new federal regulations, which allow ACCJC to realign actions to reflect a three-year rule (instead of the current two-year rule) to come into compliance prior to taking adverse action; updates and adds policy language in accordance with new regulations on the
conditions for granting a Good Cause Extension; removes the status of Restoration and all associated conditions for granting Restoration status since it is in violation of the new federal regulations; differentiates actions on institutions applying for Candidacy and for Initial Accreditation; clarifies and updates definitions in alignment with ACCJC’s values and current practices.

Since the First Read, language related to an institution’s prior accreditation history in the decision-making process was removed; language was added to clarify that when the Commission defers action, it requires the institution to submit additional information; and reference to ‘teach-out plans and agreements’ is added to the list of report examples that institutions submit to the Commission for taking action to Accept or Not Accept Report.

The Commission will remove the statement entitled Two Year Rule and Extension for Good Cause from its website after the Commission’s Second Read in June 2021.

iii. Revision: Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education
The recommended policy revisions conform to forthcoming changes in federal regulations, including updated definitions for distance education and correspondence education, and language that defines regular and substantive interaction in distance education. There are no changes since the First Read.

iv. Revision: Policy on the Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions (previously titled Policy on the Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions)
The proposed revisions include renaming the policy to Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions to reflect a mutually beneficial relationship; streamlining and clarifying the expectations of the Commission and Member Institutions by organizing the information to address each policy element for each entity; modify language regarding site visits to provide flexibility to the Commission to improve its review processes per the formative summative peer review process; adding new language indicating the parameters for a CEOs appearance during closed session; and requiring notice by the Commission for visits to an institution.

Since the First Read, additional language was added specifying the basis for the Commission’s decision-making process, capturing more succinctly language from the policy on Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions; and language was added to clarify that whenever the Commission is considering a decision on an institution’s accredited status (even if there was no peer review team report), the institution’s CEO has the right to provide written and/or oral testimony before the Commission takes action.
v. **Deletion: Policy on Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions**
   This policy is proposed for deletion since it is a redundant set of statements contained primarily within the *Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions* and other policies and manuals. This will ensure a more streamlined compilation of Commission policies to provide clear guidance for the Commission and member institutions.

vi. **New: Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Agreements**
   The proposed policy conforms to new federal regulations that revise the definitions and requirements for teach-out plans and agreements. The policy specifies the conditions that require an institution to submit a teach-out plan, and if applicable, teach-out agreement, as well as provides parameters for the Commission’s review and approval of teach-out plans and agreements through substantive change procedures.

Since the First Read, language clarifies that when Show Cause is mandated a teach-out agreement is required with the teach-out plan, which is consistent with the Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions; in alignment with the *Policy on Preaccreditation*, consistently applied the phrase ‘Candidacy status (preaccreditation)’ in reference to preaccreditation; and rather than utilize the substantive change guidelines for the review of teach-out plans and agreements, the policy revisions specify that the Commission may designate senior staff to review teach-out plans, and if a teach-out agreement is part of the teach-out plan, then the Commission will review teach-out plan and agreement.

**Items for First Reading**

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

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

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.

v. Revision: 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.