

email routing late May

June 1, 2004

*Re: Accrediting Commission Report
April 2004 Meeting*

Dear ACCET and Other Colleagues:

This letter and the accompanying enclosures are presented as an update on the actions undertaken by the ACCET Accrediting Commission at the April 2004 meeting. A summary of all final actions, referenced by institution, a summary of statistics for all actions relative to the various classifications of review, and the policy/documentation revisions in process or finalized, can be viewed and/or downloaded from the ACCET website (www.accet.org) under **Commission Report** and the **Documents and Forms** links. The following synopsis of issues and events is offered for your review.

Finalized Policy Documents

↓ **Documents 3.1, 3.2, 3.2/ESL (Combined Version), and 3.3. – Guidelines for Preparing an Electronic Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (eASER), including Attachments 1 and 2**

These documents include changes that reflect the requirements for the submission of an electronic Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (eASER) and the corresponding Branch Analytic Self-evaluation Report (eBASER). These procedures were previously piloted by several institutions which presented their eASERs via CD ROM. Feedback from these institutions and on-site evaluators was utilized to refine the process. Effective with the December 2004 review cycle forward, all ASER/BASERs are required to be submitted in this format.

The Commission also adopted Document 3 – eASER Attachment 1, Electronic ASER/BASER (eASER/BASER) Guidelines/Checklist and Document 3 – eASER Attachment 2, Electronic ASER/BASER (eASER/BASER) Routing Procedures to provide additional guidance on the requirements outlined in Document 3.1, 3.2, 3.2/ESL (Combined Version), and 3.3.

↓ **Documents 7/7.1 – Guidelines for On-Site Evaluation Teams/Affirmation of Professionalism and Ethics**

In the course of revising the previously referenced Guidelines for Preparing an electronic Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (eASER), these documents were reviewed and revised

for the purpose of recasting the guidelines for team members relative to their roles, conduct, and professional ethics, with a clearer and more comprehensive description and format.

✚ **Document 8.1 – Special Visit**

This document (formerly known as 8A - Request for Special Visit) has been revised for clarity and simplification based on current practice.

✚ **Document 12.1 – Annual Statistical Self Evaluation**

The revision to this document, applicable to vocational institutions only, represents a minor shift from past practice. Previously, under item I, ACCET provided the institution with a listing of the approved programs for verification. Under current practice, the institution is directed to ACCET's website, under Member Institutions, to view and verify the listing of approved programs.

✚ **Document 25.3 – Employer Questionnaire and Program Overview**

This document, originally developed in 1993, is utilized by institutions offering vocational programs to solicit feedback from employers when developing a new program to determine the marketability of potential graduates by assessing the program description, outline, and objectives. The questions posed to employers have been revised in order to gain more substantive feedback to better serve both the institution and ACCET in assessing the viability of the program from the essential market perspective.

✚ **Document 25.7 - Admissions Standards and Criteria**

This document has been revised for clarity relative to the differences between entrance examinations that may be required for all students and ATB testing required only for those students enrolled in vocational programs who do not possess a high school diploma or GED.

✚ **Documents 25.2 – Application Checklist, 25.4 – Program Information Sheet, 25.5 – Course Information Sheet, and 25.6 – Subject Hour Breakdown**

In accordance with ACCET's policy, all documents are reviewed, at minimum, every five years. The documents listed above were reviewed with no revisions required.

✚ **Document 30 – Policies For Recruiting, Advertising, and Promotional Materials**

This policy, adopted following a review of the call-for-comment responses to the December 2003 Commission Report, represents a substantial update of the previous policy with an expanded focus on those issues of good practice and sound judgment that reflect our high ethical standards. Some of the changes that are most notable include the following: (1) if an institution references accreditation in its advertising, an acceptable

reference to ACCET must also be included and (2) institutions may provide a hypertext mark-up language link (“html”) to an applicable page of ACCET’s web site, either directly (<http://www.accet.org>) or through an intermediate page on its web site.

Call-For-Comment Policy Drafts

✚ Document 13 – Bylaws

The ACCET Bylaws were subjected to a thorough review and revision by ACCET’s Past-Chair, Jack Moore and General Counsel, Ken Ingram, following extensive discussion at an Executive Board retreat the previous year. The last such review and revision were completed in the Fall 1994, when the former Board of Trustees and Accrediting Commission were merged into a single authority represented by the current Commission. The proposed Bylaws are presented in clearer language, more logical sequence and simpler format, incorporating appropriate changes consistent with Virginia statutes (ACCET’s venue of incorporation), and restated to represent contemporary good practices.

As a closing note, a few references and/or observations are offered:

- ✚ If anyone discovers the missing month of May, since it was last seen on May 1st, please have it returned at the earliest opportunity. This is not an urban legend.
- ✚ For the Title IV eligible institutions that have not been updated on the status of the Dear Colleague Letter GEN-04-03, issued a few months back, it remains in a somewhat ambiguous state relative to enforcement. A number of queries, including from ACCET, have been made to the Department, particularly on the one-week rule for DOD issue applicable to schools required to take attendance, such as yours. The Assistant Secretary, Sally Stroup, stated, at a Region II/III meeting in Philadelphia on April 21st, that the DCL was under review due to the concerns expressed and it would not be enforced until further notice. Subsequent guidelines from the policy office stated that schools are “expected to continue to take reasonable steps to comply with the guidelines...” Reasonable steps in the face of a questionable policy shift that was not subject to a call-for-comment from the field, is no easy matter and an early resolution is needed.
- ✚ The American Council on Education (ACE), which you will recall publishes the Directory of Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education (AIPE), to include ACCET accredited institutions, has recently published the Educational Assistance Policy Guide through its Commission on Lifelong Learning. The guide is referenced at the ACE website (www.acenet.edu) and is supposed to be available as a downloadable document in the near future. The significance of all this is that, for the first time, accreditation by a national accrediting agency is referenced identically to that of regional agencies and the guide will be provided to “business, government, industry, labor and other organizational leaders responsible for developing an organization’s educational assistance program.”

✚ The Annual Conference this year, our 30th anniversary, will be held at the Astor Crowne Plaza hotel (www.astorcrownplaza.com) in New Orleans, on October 13-15, with workshops the prior two days. Attendance has been growing steadily over the past three years since we ceased the joint CRNAA conferences and returned to the ACCET focused model. Registration can now be conducted at the ACCET website (www.accet.org) and we hope to make this event the most inspired and instructive yet; an outcome that will be greatly enhanced by your presence and participation.

There are many challenges on the horizon, some obvious like the seemingly perpetual reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and the implementation of entry fees for international students under the SEVIS program. Others are more ambiguous and subject to broader and more complex interpretation such as the spike in the number of school investigations prominently in the news of late, or the whispering in an ever-larger circle of commentators ruminating on the super sizing of some corporate schools, or whether Medical Assistant programs are the next IT, albeit not from flagging demand but oversupply. There will always be challenges and those who are looking ahead, working hard, keeping the best interests of their students first, and the success of their graduates foremost, will be in the lead position. Keep up your best work.

Sincerely,

Roger J. Williams
Executive Director