



May 31, 2007

*Re: Accrediting Commission Report
April 2007 Meeting
(via email distribution)*

Dear ACCET and Other Colleagues:

This letter is presented as an update on the actions undertaken by the ACCET Accrediting Commission at the April 2007 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, previously posted and referenced herein, can be viewed and/or downloaded from the ACCET website (www.accet.org). This report is also posted at the website under Commission Report.

The following policy synopsis below is provided for your review and future reference relative to the Commission's final policy approvals at the April meeting after careful review of the call-for-comment solicitation sent out following the December 2006 meeting. It is noted, as a reminder, that the Commission's Standards and Policy Review Committee (SPRC) undertakes a review of every policy that has not been subject to review for a period of five years.

Document 26 – Review and Approval of Additional Locations

A resolution adopted at the December 2006 meeting was incorporated into this document as item #7 in response to the Commission's determination that applications to open additional sites require an evaluation that takes account of whether it is with or without an operational history. The former case, typically owing to a purchase/merger, will require Commission review of an on-site visit report prior to any ACCET approval beyond the application phase.

Document 26.4 – Change of Location Notification

The five-year review process resulted in revisions adapted to current interpretation, including notification timeframes and geographic limits, of operational issues by the Commission.

Document 28.1 – Completion and Placement Statistics

The five-year review process, which was extended as a consequence of interim reviews and proposals, resulted in a number of corrections and/or clarifications, e.g. the simplification of the description under Program/Course Title; computations under items 5 through 11; and Document 28-compatible revision under Signature to add the previously revised requirement for internal quarterly updates, intended for management's monitoring, to the Document 28.1 statistical data page.

Document 29.1 – Enrollment Agreement Checklist

A minor revision was incorporated to replace the former requirement for a student's social security number, now requiring only the last four digits, in the interest of heightened protections against identity theft.

Document 32 – Closure / Teachout Policy

The five-year review process resulted in various revisions to this policy document, which brings it current with the Commission's experiences with implementing policy in this critical area. Specific revisions are found under Teach-out (internal), items 1, 2, 7, and 8; and the introductory paragraph under Teach-out (external).

Document 35 – Attendance Policy/ACCET Best Practices-Attendance Policy

The five-year review process, which was extended as a consequence of interim reviews, including a survey of the membership in the Fall 2006; an open forum at the Annual Conference last year; and the call-for-comment, resulted in minor changes to the existing document. After much prodding and debate, the Commission declined to set a minimum attendance requirement, leaving it up to the institutions to determine, unless otherwise directed. However, a Best Practice Attendance Policy was approved to inspire thoughtful consideration in the field, which includes a 90% cumulative attendance model.

Document 3.MT – Massage Therapy

This policy development parallels previous efforts for ESL, IDL, and OAD, wherein an overlay template to ACCET Document 3.1, the guidelines for preparing a vocational-focused eASER, serve to elicit a more relevant and valid evaluation of the institution. At the ACCET Annual Conference in October 2006, a task force was convened to analyze and develop field specific criteria for institutions offering Massage Therapy programs. The subsequent call-for-comment resulted in several suggested revisions, a number of which were incorporated into this finalized policy document.

Document 25/25.1 – Policy/Application for Curriculum Revision/Addition

As there were no revisions to these two documents, only the revisions review date was changed to reflect the five-year review.

Further, the Commission reviewed a number of policies and approved draft versions for a call-for-comment to solicit your views on the following:

- **Document 1 – The Accreditation Plan: Policies and Procedures**

The Eligibility criteria (pages 3-4) include a requirement for initial applicant institutions to have stable ownership and control for at least two years prior to application to ACCET. There is a provision, however, authorizing the Commission to waive the requirement based on a finding of “acceptable documentation showing the applicant institution is owned or controlled by an educational organization with a reputable history of stable operations and by individual(s) with extensive credentials that demonstrate competent administration of an accredited institution.” The proposed revision would allow more flexibility to the Commission in considering a waiver without the current emphasis on the prior administration of an accredited institution.

- **Document 5 – Guidelines for the Utilization of External Consultants in the Accreditation Process**

The five-year review process indicated no substantive changes required, but simply minor verbage and syntax revisions.

- **Document 6 – Faculty/Administrative Personnel Form**

The five-year review process resulted in a number of revisions to the document as well as to its application. The draft policy divides the document into two sections: Section I to be maintained in the personnel file attached to a resume or, lacking a resume, to include Section II.

- **Document 28 – Completion and Placement Policy**

The Commission’s Completion and Placement Committee recommended clarification of the definition and explanation section under the heading Continuing Employment/Upgrade as a Placement, after seeing a developing pattern of simplistic document recordings that undermined the validity of its assessment. The revision makes clear that there must be a demonstrable, tangible outcome directly linked to the training in order to be accepted as training-related.

As a closing note on pertinent issues past, present, and future, the following is offered for your consideration and reference:

- At a U.S. Department of Education Accreditation Summit meeting on March 22nd, to which ACCET was invited as a participant, the department sought to further solicit feedback on some of the accreditation–related issues addressed in the report from the Secretary’s Futures Commission titled: “A Test of Leadership-Charting the Future of Higher Education,” a copy of which can be found at www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/final-report.pdf. That report and the just-completed meeting of the Department’s National Advisory Committee for Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI), which we earlier highlighted with an article on an accrediting agency losing its recognition, all point to the importance of embracing an outcomes-based model for assessing student learning and institutional effectiveness, as essential accountability measures. Such measures as completion and placement results have been a centerpiece of ACCET accreditation since the early 90s. The early and ongoing support of the ACCET membership on such issues is a credit to you and a benefit to your students.
- ACCET’s recognition by the U.S. Department of Education, last reaffirmed before the National Advisory Committee for Institutional Quality and Integrity in December 2002, is up for renewal at the December 2007 NACIQI meeting. The recognition process is analogous to that of accreditation and our “petition” (comparable to an ASER) for continued recognition is in final preparation for delivery to the Department tomorrow June 1st.
- ACCET’s Annual Conference and Business Meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency, Lake Tahoe, Nevada the week of November 5th, with the Accreditation Workshops and Team Evaluator Workshop immediately preceding the conference. The program will be of the expected high standard for quality you would consider worthy of an accrediting agency that expects the same of you, and we intend to deliver. Check out the registration on-line at our website.

This concludes the report on the Commission meeting and supplemental update. Thank you for your ongoing efforts on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of students served by ACCET accredited institutions every year. Our partnership for quality is alive and well. Best regards.

Sincerely,



Roger J. Williams
Executive Director