



ACCREDITING COUNCIL FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION & TRAINING
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May 21, 2009

*Re: Accrediting Commission Report
April 2009 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 2009 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 on the website under Commission Reports.

Provided below is a synopsis of the Commission's actions on ACCET policies at the April 2009 meeting to include: (1) a call for comment by the membership and (2) finalized document approvals. At the conclusion of those sections, you will find some additional commentary on other issues of interest offered for your reference and consideration.

Call for Comment Solicited

As a reminder, the Commission's Standards and Policy Review Committee (SPRC) undertakes a review of every policy that has not been otherwise subject to review for a period of five years. The draft documents and call for comment form are available on ACCET's website.

3 eASER Attachment 1 – Electronic ASER/BASER Guidelines/Checklist and 3 eASER/BASER Attachment 2 – Electronic ASER/BASER Routing Procedures

As part of the normal review process, Document 3 eASER Attachment 1 and Document 3eASER/BASER Attachment 2, were presented to SPRC for updating, review, and/or revision. For easier reference by the accreditation applicant, proposed is the consolidation of the two documents into a single document with correspondent changes to the title, format, content, and document number. Content revisions are proposed to update the requirements for preparing and distributing the eASER/BASER. The Commission approved the document to go out for review and comment.

Document 8 – Visit Form

Document 8 was presented to SPRC for updating, review, and/or revision in conjunction with Document 8.1 – Special Visit Form that was being considered as part of the normal review process. Proposed are the following changes: (a) the addition of an email address for the contact person and (b) a more specific request for information about schedule considerations to facilitate team scheduling. The Commission approved the document to go out for review and comment.

Document 8.1 – Special Visit Form

As part of the normal review process, Document 8.1 was presented to SPRC for updating, review, and/or revision. Proposed are the following changes: (a) the addition of an email address for the contact person; and (b) a more specific request for information about schedule considerations to facilitate team scheduling. The Commission approved the document to go out for review and comment.

Document 13 - Bylaws

Document 13 was presented to SPRC for updating, review and/or revision. Proposed are the following revisions: (1) to permit Public Commissioners to serve three-year terms, instead of the current provision for two terms; the extended service premium for valued, experienced Public Commissioners would be of great benefit to ACCET; and (2) additional language provided by ACCET's attorney pertaining to litigation involving ACCET wherein disputes over conflicts between state laws are at issue. The Commission approved the document to go out for review and comment.

Document 30 -- Policies for Recruitment and Advertising/Promotional Practices

As part of the normal review process, Document 30 was presented to SPRC for updating, review, and/or revision. Changes are proposed to: (a) emphasize that institutions' websites are considered applicable communications with prospective students, and therefore, covered by Document 30; and (b) clarify that all institutions are to include ACCET contact information in any publications that offer substantial information about the institution and reference ACCET accreditation. The Commission approved the document to go out for review and comment.

Document 31 – Cancellation and Refund Policy

Document 31 was presented to SPRC for updating, review, and/or revision. Currently, programs “less than 300 clock hours (or the credit hour equivalent)” are excluded from ACCET's specified refund policy regarding “*withdrawals or terminations after start of class*”. Increasingly, short-term vocational programs are being offered at substantial costs to students for whom the policy was intended given the widely variant and sometimes inadequate protection of state refund and cancellation policies. Therefore, a change is proposed to limit the current exclusion to

“*avocational programs*”. The Commission approved the document to go out for review and comment.

Finalized Document Approvals

The following documents were approved by the Commission after a careful review of all comments received from a prior call-for-comment solicitation, except for the eligibility criteria in Document 1 – The Accreditation Process, which was approved through a vote of the membership.

Document 1 – The Accreditation Process

The proposed change was to broaden ACCET’s ability to waive the two-year continuous ownership requirement for an organization or individual with a “*reputable history of ethical, competent, and effective organizational management and prior experience operating an educational entity*”. Prior to the change, the requirement was that individuals have “*extensive credentials that demonstrate competent administration of an accredited institution*”. The document was approved based on a favorable vote by the membership, which was required because the proposed change affected the eligibility criteria for accreditation.

Document 4 – Application for Accreditation

Significant changes were proposed to certain sections of the application (e.g. ownership information) and the format of the document, in addition to those proposed to simplify and clarify the document by: (a) identifying all required exhibits both in the body of the application and the “Checklist of Required Exhibits”, (b) numbering exhibits in the order they appear in the application, and (c) reformatting the way in which information is requested. The Commission approved this revised document, following a review of all written comments.

Document 7.1 – Affirmation of Professionalism and Ethics

No changes were proposed to this document and, therefore, the Commission approved this document without revision.

Document 16 – Transfer of Credit Policy

The proposed change was to have institutions disclose in their transfer of credit policy any articulation agreements that they have established with other higher education institutions, in accordance with the requirements of the recently passed Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). The Commission approved this revised document, following a review of all written comments.

Document 22 – Change of Ownership or Control

Under consideration were revisions to the policy document pertaining to changes of ownership in conjunction with proposed revisions to Document 22.1 – Application for Reinstatement of Accreditation Following a Change of Ownership or Control. Changes were proposed for purposes of clarity and to more closely align the definition of a “change of ownership with a change of control of a proprietary institution” with the definition used by the U. S. Department of Education. The Commission approved this revised document, following a review of all written comments.

Document 24 – Profile of Institutional Clientele and Programs

Minor changes were proposed to this document consistent with data collection requirements established by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). The Commission approved this revised document, following a review of all written comments.

Document 33 – Definitions

Proposed were modifications to the definitions of “branch”, “auxiliary classroom”, and “classroom extensions” to be consistent with recent changes to Document 26 – Review and Approval of Additional Locations. The Commission approved this revised document, following a review of all written comments.

Best Practices – Sample Leave of Absence Policy and Transfer of Credit Policy

As part of the continuing effort to provide guidance on Commission judged best practices for consideration by ACCET institutions, a sample Transfer of Credit Policy and Leave of Absence Policy were developed. The model institutional policies/practices are in two important areas responsive to ACCET policy and guidelines provided in Documents 16 – Transfer of Credit Policy and Document 36 – Leave of Absence Policy. The Commission approved these documents to provide such guidance to institutions.

Other Issues of Interest

Accreditation Presentation to the Egyptian Banking Institute

There are a multitude of reasons for which various institutions seek accreditation but the overriding focus of a mission-driven organization is striving to compete at a level of quality that inspires both internal staff toward high professional standards, and external stakeholders that identify and value the enhanced benefits provided in the training marketplace. At the April Commission meeting, we added such an organization to the ACCET network with an initial grant of accreditation to the Egyptian Banking Institute, operated under the aegis of the Central Bank of Egypt. At their request for a presentation of the certificates on behalf of the Accrediting Commission, I found myself in a distant land surrounded by such thoughtful and committed colleagues at the staff and governance levels not unlike what I so often experience at our annual conferences. The flush of pride so apparent in the numerous expressions of appreciation over their achievement of accreditation over a protracted period of development and refinement of the institute’s operation was a refreshing reminder of how much we can all accomplish with a simple

compass, hard work, and dedication to meet at the intersection of high standards. You can find a bit more, if interested, at the website: <http://www.ebi.gov.eg/>.

Negotiated Rulemaking on the Higher Education Opportunities Act

As previously reported to you in the December 2008 Commission Report, this process is a central component of the HEOA's statutory language being applied in practice, and the Team #5 committee on accreditation finished its work with a "consensus" agreement this past Tuesday, May 19th. Having served on such a committee as a primary representative in 1997, following the prior iteration of that statute, and this time as an alternate, it is striking to observe the shift in both focus and tone in general, and the role of national accreditation and proprietary institutions in particular. It is quite a span between those days when suspicion was more the norm in our sector's relations with the USDE and state licensing agencies, as well as with other accrediting agencies, compared with the active voice and credibility that is now the prevalent example for engagement. The federal and non-federal members of the NegReg committee conducted themselves in the most professional manner directed toward the serious art of listening and the resultant principled compromises that made consensus possible. The proposed regulations to be promulgated from this process are expected to be published for your review and comment in late July and, while we can all find quibbles with various elements of the proposal, particularly those that will necessitate some significant changes in how we conduct our accreditation activities (which for the most part are few in number) we have to keep in mind that: (1) the statute is the law of the land, flaws and all, which must be followed; and (2) the NPRM (Notice of Proposed Rule Making) to be sent out by the Department for further feedback on accreditation will be representative of a consensus across a broad spectrum of interests and perspectives. I think you will find the voice of reason, your voice, in its composition.

In closing, I would simply like to thank you all for your continued commitment to the high standards your accredited status has represents in the daily efforts you expend to place foundations under the varied aspirations your students bring to you. Such are the accomplishments that best represent our important work together in this partnership for quality. Best regards.

Sincerely,



ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

Roger J. Williams
Executive Director