



September 28, 2007

*Re: Accrediting Commission Report
August 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 August 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 Reports.

The following policy synopsis is provided for your review and future reference relative to the Commission's final approvals at the August meeting after the call-for-comment solicitation sent out following the April 2007 meeting.

Finalized Document Approvals

- **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 verbiage and syntax revisions; Commission approved.

- **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 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; Commission approved.

- **Document 8 – Request for an On-Site Visit**

As part of its normal five-year review process, Document 8 was presented for updating, review, and revision. This document was revised such that the ACCET ID number be added to the form; Commission approved.

- **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 states: “No sooner than 30 days following graduation, the graduate must sign a statement acknowledging his/her level of satisfaction and indicate the result, e.g., promotion, increase in responsibility, salary increase, or had to have completed the training as a condition of continued employment or can provide documentation of potential for advancement in a training-related field;” Commission approved.

- **Document 31 – Cancellation and Refund Policy & Document 31.ESL**

The policy revision changes the requirement to allow refunds be made within 45 days instead of 30 days of the first day of scheduled classes, in the case where a student never starts and within 30 days of the date of determination (DOD), in the case of an enrolled student who drops; Commission approved.

- **Student Loan Code of Conduct Resolution**

Due to the recent scandal regarding the questionable conduct of some financial aid officers at post secondary institutions, the Executive Director requested consideration of such a code. Given the complexity of this issue, the Commission determined that a comprehensive policy on this issue requires more time to develop in a thoughtful manner. However, it also believes that it is important for ACCET to take a principled position on this issue, and has, therefore, crafted a resolution (circulated via email to all ACCET accredited institutions on August 31, 2007) and will be subject to policy formulation at the 12/07 meeting; Commission approved.

- **Best Practices-Business Plan**

The Commission reviewed two documents addressing the development of a business plan that meets Standard I-C Planning: the first is a general overview describing the elements of an acceptable business plan; and the second is a sample business plan that focuses on one particular activity, but nevertheless illustrates how a business plan can be presented; Commission approved as a “best practice” for a business plan.

ACCET Membership Vote Recommended

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

A call-for-comment issued at the April 2007 meeting focused on a Document 1 provision authorizing the Commission to waive an eligibility 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.” There were no comments received; however, the currently proposed revision would allow more flexibility to the Commission in considering a waiver on the basis of the following criteria: “This requirement may be waived by the Commission upon provision of acceptable documentation showing the applicant is owned or controlled by an organization and/or individual(s) with a reputable history of ethical, competent, and effective organizational management and prior experience operating an educational entity.” This proposal will be presented for membership discussion and approval at the November 7, 2007 Business Meeting at ACCET’s annual conference.

Call-for-Comment Solicited

(red line versions and call-for-comment forms are under Commission Reports at ACCET’s website)

- **Document 23 – Ability to Benefit**

As part of its normal five-year review process, Document 23 – Ability to Benefit was presented for updating, review, and revision. Because it was broadened to address other admissions issues that have been incorporated into the current document, membership feedback is solicited.

- **Document 27 – Guidelines for Filing Financial Reports**

Proposed changes to this document under section “General Requirements” require institutions to submit financial statements if more than six months have passed since the end date of the institution’s fiscal year, in order to ensure timely information for review by the Commission’s Financial Review Committee (FRC).

- **Document 27.1 – Special Requirements for Filing Financial Reports**

In order to make Document 27.1 consistent with Document 27, FRC proposed changes to Section I, Reaccreditation Applications to require applicants to submit financial statements if more than six months has elapsed since the end date of the institution’s fiscal year, and to require attested, internally generated statements for the fiscal year to date current to within one month of the application due date.

- **Document 45 – Steps to Follow for Reaccreditation**

As part of its normal five-year review process, Document 45 was presented for updating, review, and revision, whereupon the Standards and Policies Review Committee (SPRC) recommended language that would impose fines for late submission of the application and/or eASER, and to cause a self-executed withdrawal of accreditation if submission of documents is grossly out of sync with the published schedules. It further recommended that the reaccreditation process be modified to require workshop attendance at least four months prior to the schedule due date for submission of the eASER. Finally, the SPRC proposed to delete any reference to the specific amount of fines in this document, which properly belong in Document 10.

- **Document 50A – On-Site Financial Aid Review Checklist/Guidelines**

Document 50FA is proposed as reflected in the edit boxes in the right margin of the document. Section V – File Review, the fourth bullet point was changed to reference Document 31 rather than specify the number of days for a timely refund; and the chart has been similarly modified as well.

This concludes the report on the Commission meeting and supplemental updates.

As you can see the Commission and staff have been vigorously paddling upstream here off the shores of paperwork city. Your thoughtful insights and input on these policy issues, whether for, against, or neutral, are important to the continued progress and success of our partnership for quality. To that end, we hope to see many of you at the upcoming ACCET Annual Conference at the Lake Tahoe, Nevada, Hyatt hotel on November 7-9, where the opportunity for direct, open dialogue between the Commission, staff, members, and other colleagues, will benefit that objective. In addition to the expected high performance conference, as has become the longstanding practice, we also have the Accreditation Workshop (Monday-Tuesday, 5th and 6th) and the Team Evaluators Workshop (Tuesday-6th), which are both great opportunities to engage in our important enterprise. Hope to see you there.

Sincerely,



Roger J. Williams
Executive Director