



Accrediting Commission  
for Community and Junior  
Colleges

# Leading Accreditation: What College Executives Need to Know

*A presentation for College Leadership  
CCLC Conference, November 2009*

# What We Will Discuss

- The Higher Education Opportunity Act – new regulations and directions
- What we can expect from Washington
- The New Negotiated Rulemaking Sessions on Integrity
- President's Role
- Discussion, Questions, and Answers

# 1. The HEOA of 2008

The Act resulted in new regulations, published in late October 2009, that require accreditor review of institutions:

- More Accountability in Areas of Concern
  - Growth, Distance Education, For-Profit Sector
- More Concern with Institutional Integrity
- Some response to public concerns about portability of degrees and credits

# The HEOA of 2008 - Colleges

- New regulations that require accreditor review of institutions.
  - Definitions of Distance Education and Correspondence Education – Why Now?
  - Change in enrollment or “significant growth” of students served.
  - Student Achievement – institutions and accreditors set standards, feds are barred.
  - Transfer of Credit – Institutions are required to have policies, criteria, and make them public.

# The HEOA of 2008 - Colleges

- New regulations that require accreditor review of institutions.
  - Teach out plan approval for all institutions, approved by accreditor – for a closing institution and for *a closing site* where 100% or more of program is offered.
  - Institutions awarding credit for direct assessment of student learning must obtain USDE prior approval, accreditors are to review such programs.
  - DE: Institutions must track the identify of students who participate in DE or CE, protect student identity and notify students of associated costs.

# The HEOA of 2008 - Accreditors

- New regulations that directly impact accreditors and their ability to retain recognition:
  - Recognition of accreditor – occurs only if an accreditor complies with criteria and is *effective in its application* of criteria.
  - Demonstration of Compliance in 12 months and US DE officials may monitor and act on institutions when NACIQI cannot meet.
  - Accreditors must train team members, and include specialists in DE on teams.

# The HEOA of 2008 - Accreditors

- New regulations that directly impact accreditors and their ability to retain recognition:
  - Substantive Change definition is expanded to include contracting with a non-Title IV institution.
  - Additional locations may not be grandfathered into approval after change in ownership.
  - Accreditors must provide certain records to the DE and not inform the institution about an inquiry.
  - Materials provided by accreditors to the US DE are subject to the Freedom of Information Act

# The HEOA of 2008 - Accreditors

- New regulations that directly impact accreditors and their ability to retain recognition:
  - Appeals process changed to allow 11<sup>th</sup> hour information on fiscal information that resolves the reasons for termination of accreditation
  - Accrediting agencies required to provide notice to the public of a decision to place on probation or to terminate accreditation, with reasons for the decision. Institution must be given opportunity to provide official comment. (Enhanced Statement of Accredited Status)

## 2. The New Negotiated Rulemaking

- New Rulemaking commenced in November 2009 and will conclude January 2010.

Themes are:

- Institutional integrity
- Wise use of federal funds for higher education
- Accuracy of institutional information given to students, the public

# New Neg Reg's Five Topics

- Misrepresentation of information given to students and the public;
- State authorization as a component of eligibility for Title IV funds.
- Definition of a credit hour/ identification of required "program length."
- Agreements between institutions of HE- leading to degrees conferred in an institution's name.
- Satisfactory academic progress, ability to benefit, eligibility for year round Pell Grants.

# New Neg Reg Outcomes

- CRAC (Council for Regional Accrediting Commissions) is represented in neg reg.
- ACCJC will keep member institutions apprised of new regulations when they are approved.

# 3. What Pressures on Accreditation/Institutions We Can Expect From Washington

- More push for institutional performance by asking accreditors to ask for data, hold institutions “accountable.”
- Continued pressure to create a national quality assurance body; strategic attacks on accreditation or self regulation to build pressure for same. E.g., “Accreditation” by Kevin Carey, Nov. 17, 2009, American Enterprise Institute.
- An ongoing dialogue about student outcomes, how accreditors and institutions can improve the number of completers and the quality of learning outcomes.
- More research, funding, discussion from foundations pushing for changes/improvements in higher education.

# Renewed Public Agenda

- President Obama has called for the United States to work toward a “new culture of accountability.”
- Higher Education has a key goal to play in national priorities.
  - Regain the United States’ standing as the country with the highest proportion of college graduates by 2020.
  - Every American to commit to at least one year of higher education.

# The Public Agenda Requires Changes

- An increasing number of Americans will have to enroll and *complete* a higher education sequence (A.A. Degrees, Certificates, Bachelor's Degrees).
- An increasing number diverse students will have to be successful – high access and strong support for success will be necessary.

# Opportunity in the Challenges

- Secretary Duncan has written:  
“Reorienting the culture of postsecondary management is essential because the demand and national expectations for higher education are expanding rather than shrinking.”  
(Arne Duncan, “Rethinking Higher Education: Moving Beyond the Iron Triangle”, in Trusteeship, Sept.-Oct. 2009)
- Colleges will be asked to rethink how they achieve their goals, to redirect their efforts.

# The Iron Triangle\*



\*Adapted from: Duncan, Arne (U.S. Education Secretary). Rethinking Higher Education: Beyond the Iron Triangle. Trusteeship, Volume: 17, Number: 5. September/October 2009.

## 4. President's Role

“ A president or chancellor occupies the space where faculty interests and goals intersect with society's, and students, needs. A key responsibility of the president is to create a productive dynamic between these two realms. The president must formulate a vision of the institution's future, unite the board, faculty, and other constituents in developing and enlisting support for the vision; and then build consensus around the vision, and take the risks required to achieve it...” (Gerald I. Bailes, “Aligning Higher Education with a Renewed Public Agenda”, in Trusteeship, Sept.-Oct. 2009.)

# Role of the President in Leading Accreditation

- Exercise the authority inherent in the position to keep the institution focused on its fulfillment of mission and on student success.
- Create a vision for the future of the institution, and unite the board, faculty and administrators in the pursuit of that mission.
- Lead the effort to develop a culture of evidence, and to use evaluation and analysis of key institutional performance indicators to set institutional goals for change and improvement.

# The Role of the President on an ACCJC College Campus

- A college culture that supports accreditation quality standards starts with the actively involved President.
  - If you support and promote accreditation standards and processes, so will your employees and board.
  - If you spend significant time and attention on accreditation-required quality processes or Self Study, so will your employees and Board.
- It takes less time to do it right than to do it over.
- Sometimes accreditation is the only leverage you have to do it right; then you are likely doing it over.

# Leading The Change

- Higher Education is undergoing significant change:
  - From front end enrollment targets to likely funding for program completion/student success.
  - From teaching objectives to learning outcomes.
  - From evaluation of institutional process to assessment of learning
  - From the students' "the right to try" to "the need/right to achieve."

# Discussion, Questions, Answers

Thank you.

