

ACCJC NEWS

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Fall 2011

Higher Education Challenges “Across the Pond”

On September 10, the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) met with the European Quality Assurance Network (ENQA) in London. The discussion focused on advances and challenges in higher education quality assurance in Europe and in the U.S. President Beno attended for the ACCJC, and below are some things learned about the current practices in Europe.

Demands and expectations for higher education are changing across the globe. In the last 12 years, the European Union has undertaken a very significant project to align its higher education practices across borders. Europeans began an alignment of higher education practices across 27 countries in 1999 with the Bologna Accord. (References: see articles in the Commission’s newsletter, *ACCJC NEWS*, Summer 2010 and Fall 2010.) The original tools for aligning higher education practices were: (1) definition of the general length and meaning of a baccalaureate degree, a master’s degree and a doctoral degree; (2) definition of a system for granting credits; (3) creation of diploma supplements that describe each graduate’s capabilities and experiences in some detail, and (4) development of degree qualifications frameworks that describe and certify the necessary knowledge and skills persons must demonstrate to be awarded a degree. In 2005, the Bergen Communiqué added a fifth tool for addressing quality: (5) The national governments were to adopt standards and guidelines for quality in the European Higher Education Area which are designed to be applicable to all institutions of higher education and quality assurance agencies.



STATUS IN 2011: The Bologna Process has been renamed the European Higher Education Area, and now includes 47 countries. (1) Most countries have created a three-year baccalaureate degree and now have implemented a master’s degree and distinguished both from the doctoral degree. These are called the three “cycles” or levels of higher education. The agreement on definition of sequential bachelors and masters degrees has improved transparency and trust in institutions’ degrees. (2) There has been an agreement on meaning and award of academic credit. (3) Some, but not all, institutions are issuing the diploma supplement, but not all are issuing it in English so that it can be readily used across national borders. (4) Some, but not all, nations are using a Degree Qualifications Framework. (5) All 47 participating nations now have quality assurance agencies in various stages of development. A European Registry provides common standards for quality assurance agencies: however, not all agencies have been approved by the Registry yet. There is a mix of types of quality assurance agencies; some countries have a single governmental agency, some have competing agencies, some share agencies and some countries have an agency for each state.

SIMILAR POLICY AND POLITICAL ISSUES: Some of the policy and political criticisms and debates about European quality assurance agencies are similar to those in the United States:

- ◆ The quality assurance agencies do not set absolute (black and white) standards and focus - i.e., they should be less “contextual.”
- ◆ The agencies are not able to guarantee that an institution will conform to quality standards at all times - i.e., they should prevent bad behavior.

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- ◆ The agencies do not achieve goals of producing more graduates in needed disciplines - i.e., they should function as a public policy tools to redirect institutional energies toward government goals.
- ◆ The quality assurance agencies face challenges convincing academics and government ministers that quality assurance processes are important and worth the effort - i.e., internal quality assurance processes are slow to get started at some institutions.
- ◆ Some European governments are discussing student outcomes as a simpler and more direct measure of educational quality, and debate with opponents about using those outcomes as a sole measure of educational quality.
- ◆ Longstanding institutional ranking systems are preferred by some who wish for a simple measure of quality even though the rankings are not solely based on educational outcomes.
- ◆ The longstanding practice of accepting degrees from institutions without requiring certification of institutional quality through an accreditation process is slow to change.

It is interesting to see that European and American quality assurance agencies and institutions face similar challenges. There is one last common practice worth noting: quality assurance agencies in some European countries are beginning to sample assessed student learning outcomes, and accreditors and institutions are considering what level of learning is sufficient. This practice will grow on both sides of “the pond.” ◆

Revisions to Application of Standard III.D.

New accounting regulations (GASB 45) and volatile economic conditions in the region and nation have made financial management, controls, stability and planning a more critically important part of institutional quality assurance. To determine whether the ACCJC’s accreditation review practices are up to date, the Commission convened an ad hoc Financial Review Task Force and asked it for advice on how to update the review process, and related documents.

The Task Force included the following financial experts from member institutions:

- ◆ President Steve Kinsella (Gavilan College, Chair); Assistant Vice Chancellor Fred Harris (California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office); President Jerry Patton (College of the Desert); Deputy Chancellor for Finance and Administration Jon Sharpe (Los Rios Community College District); Associate Vice President for Administrative Affairs Michael Unebasami (University of Hawaii Community Colleges); Vice Chancellor for Finance Fred Williams (North Orange Community College District); President John Zimmerman (MTI College).
- ◆ The Task Force met several times between February and September 2011. It reviewed Accreditation Standard III.D, Financial Resources, the ACCJC manuals and guidelines, and the roles of evaluation team members with financial services expertise. To date, the outcomes of the Task Force include:
- ◆ Revisions of the Required Evidentiary Documents used by visiting teams to evaluate institutional financial services to reflect new accounting requirements for other post-employment benefits and liabilities such as loans and bonds. *The new documents will be used by all teams beginning with spring 2012 evaluation visits and have been posted on the Commission’s website at: www.accjc.org on the “Publications & Policies” page.*
- ◆ Revisions to the Guide to Evaluating Institutions manual to include additional questions about financial practices and quality, including how OPEB is planned for and funded. *This will be available on the ACCJC website by November 1, 2011 at: www.accjc.org/Publications & Policies*
- ◆ Development of a training program for Chief Business Officers to help them to become more informed about accreditation processes and to expand their participation in accreditation activities and visits. This will be first offered at the (California) Association of Chief Business Officers meeting October 25.
- ◆ Recommendations for revisions to Standard III.D, Financial Resources. These recommendations will be submitted to the ACCJC’s Policy Committee for further consideration and possible adoption. ◆

FOCUS ON QUALITY

Metric, Metric, Metric, Who's Got a Metric?

BY BRAD C. PHILLIPS



In education, accountability pressures are mounting, and higher education accreditation has been undergoing a gradual change in the level of scrutiny applied to institutions. Not that long ago, higher education regional accreditors focused on an institution's mission, applied standards of good practice and assessed the degree to which an institution was fulfilling its mission within the standards. Now, in addition to institutional practices, the scrutiny is at the level of student outcomes. There are growing expectations that achievement of mission be demonstrated in part by providing evidence of student success and student learning. Today, increased accountability of our K-12 partners, especially in the age of "No Child Left Behind" legislation, has been the major driving force behind the push for increased accountability at all levels of education.

Some welcome the increased attention; others have pushed back. While the devil is in the details of exactly how accountability is applied, the pressure we are receiving can be a good thing. With grim statistics of our nation falling behind - from the percentage of adults with an earned certificate or degree (we are now 10th in the world), or data on our nation's competitiveness, falling from first in 2008, to fifth in a recent 2011 report - we have cause to worry.

METRICS HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

In response to increased scrutiny, we have a litany of performance measures - often referred to as metrics - proposed by the Federal Government, states, national organizations and foundations. The call by the Obama Administration and the Lumina Foundation for the doubling of degree and certificate completion adds to this powerful focus on community colleges. The nation cannot double completion without attention to this segment. Community colleges are in the cross hairs of the accountability movement.

The work done by Complete College America and their reports for 33 states has also increased attention on metrics. The reports focus on a number of student outcomes, including degree completion, transition through the basic skills sequence, course completion and other areas. California's Community College Chancellor's Office has recently published draft recommendations from its Taskforce on Student Success, including a call for the development of progression metrics and a student success scorecard. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has also been a significant force behind metric development with substantial dollars focused on supporting and improving the success of community colleges. Metrics assessing the outcomes of the foundation's efforts are embedded in the work.

"Achieving the Dream," a national initiative that includes 160 institutions across the nation was the adrenaline shot that helped focus the nation on community colleges. Begun by the Lumina Foundation and now supported by foundations across the country, "Achieving the Dream" focuses on five key metrics: course completion; completion of basic skills coursework and transition through the sequence to degree level courses; completion of gatekeeper courses; persistence from semester to semester and year to year, and degree completion. Developed by community college experts from across the country, these five metrics often form the basis for more recent metric proposals. Metric development and the subsequent measuring of colleges on these and other proposed outcomes is not ending anytime soon and will likely be refined over time.

With all of this attention to measurement, where should a college start? Our work has demonstrated, and some notable experts agree, course success is the key metric. As Kay McClenney of the University of Texas states, "students complete college one course at a time."

HOW DOES A COLLEGE KNOW THAT IT IS DOING WELL?

Colleges can and do measure course success, but how do they know that they are doing well? Benchmarking

Focus on Quality, continued on page 5

is one way to assess this. Benchmarking is the process by which a college compares its rates with an accepted standard. The most common approaches include the use of historical data and comparisons with “like” colleges. “Achieving the Dream” colleges, for example, have used historical baselines of their own data as their benchmark and have sought to improve their rates over time. Community college comparison data is available through the National Community College Benchmark project. Almost 300 institutions have participated in this service.

Colleges send their data and can set up comparisons with like institutions across the country. As the Complete College America work continues, comparison data should also become available from this source.

Given the possibility of benchmarking, what is a good target to achieve? Setting target goals is a combination of art and science. A college may want to improve success rates, but what is a reasonable year to year increase? We advise colleges to set an achievable increase and a stretch goal. In thinking about course success, if an average class size is 33, then one more student earning a successful course grade per section would be a 3% increase. The question colleges have to ask is: is that a reasonable increase?

THE \$64,000 QUESTION

What does this all mean for student learning? Our work in Cal-PASS has shown that bringing faculty together in a non-threatening environment to review data on student outcomes provides the space to move beyond the numbers and focus on what faculty, as collegial colleagues, want a student to know, understand and be able to do as a result of instruction in their classes. Course success data are merely the starting point that can lead to courageous, collaborative, rich discussions about curriculum. We have numerous examples demonstrating that when the faculty come together to improve course outcomes, the resulting discussions and changes in practice not only help to focus on the development of consistent student learning outcomes, but also lead to continuing improvements in course success rates.

In the end, the development and implementation of metrics has to inform practice and institutions’ course success rates have to have the capacity to “drill down” to a discipline and a course, or faculty will simply not be engaged in the work. If improvements are to be made, educators must trust the numbers and work together to improve student outcomes. ♦

Dr. Brad C. Phillips is the Executive Director of the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS), a system that collects data about student success and transition from every segment of education (K-16). Cal-PASS collects data and reports information through the Standardized Metrics for Analysis, Reporting, and Tracking (SMART) Tool, which has gathered information from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office database from fall 2002 through spring 2011. Cal-PASS partners identify problems, develop local solutions, and bring them to scale throughout Calif. to achieve success at every level. Cal-PASS representatives are regular presenters at all ACCJC Regional Workshops. A similar vehicle for data collection and reporting for two- and four-year colleges in the University of Hawaii System is available through Hi-PASS.

Summary of New Requirements for Accreditors and Institutions

Since the Higher Education Opportunities Act was adopted in 2008, the Department of Education has issued a series of new regulations. The last were effective July 1, 2011, although parts are delayed by litigation designed to stop implementation. The ACCJC has been publicizing new regulations as they were adopted (see ACCJC News, Summer 2010; Fall 2010; Spring 2011 and Summer 2011). This article summarizes *what is important for the accreditation site visit process*. The 2012 edition of ACCJC's Guide to Evaluating Institutions will integrate these requirements. For this year, teams have been informed and trained in new procedures.

- ✚ **The institution must** provide a description of any correspondence programs that the institution offers in which a student may earn 50% or more of a certificate, program, or degree.
 - ◆ Teams are required to document these programs, the learning resources, and student support services that are provided to enrolled students;
 - ◆ Teams must also review the materials and student work;
 - ◆ Teams should sample a correspondence course to examine the institution's adherence to its policies for establishing credit for the course.¹

- ✚ **The institution must** provide a description of any distance education programs that the institution offers in which a student may earn 50% or more of a certificate, program, or degree.
 - ◆ Teams are required to document the quality of these programs, the learning resources, and student support services that are provided enrolled students, the materials, electronic access, and student work.
 - ◆ Teams should sample a distance education course to examine the institution's adherence to its policies for establishing credit for the course.
 - ◆ Accreditors are required to monitor enrollment growth and to establish thresholds for operationally defining "significant growth."

- ✚ **The institution must** have in place policy and procedure that ensure the integrity of distance education and correspondence education to ensure that the student registered for a course is the student doing the work and receiving the grades/credits for the course. (§602.17(g))
 - ◆ Teams must determine whether the institution has adequate processes to ensure integrity and are, at minimum, issuing each student an ID and a protected password, requiring proctored examinations or using new technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity.
 - ◆ Team reports will describe what methods the institution uses and whether those are judged by the team to be effective in preserving the integrity of the credits and grades awarded.

- ✚ **The institution must** establish a clear policy and procedures for award of credit which identifies the student work necessary to earn a credit hour.² Institutions must adhere to their own policy in assigning credit to all courses, in all modes of delivery including credits awarded for independent study, for service based learning, and for internships. Any institutional calculations for converting clock hours to credit hours for the purpose of awarding credit in courses/programs where there may be requirements for students to complete hours on task for licensure or occupational purposes must comply with the federal formula for conversion. (§602.16 (a) and §668.8(k)(2)).
 - ◆ Accreditors are required to review the institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hour and determine whether they conform to commonly accepted practice in higher education including "time invested and content mastered."

¹ The House of Representatives has passed legislation repealing the U.S.D.E. regulations on the "Credit Hour", but at present there is no similar bill in the Senate, so the regulations "stand."

² The federal regulations required a federal definition of a credit hour as equivalent to the Carnegie unit. The U.S.D.E. has now advised that institutions may establish equivalencies that pass the test of peer review, and which approximate the work done in a Carnegie unit in accordance with commonly accepted practice in higher education. (U.S.D.E. "Dear Colleague Letter, March 2011). These equivalencies are helpful for non-traditional learning modalities.

New Requirements, *continued from page 6*

- ◆ Teams are required to sample how the institution awards credit for campus based, face-to-face, and distance education classes, and other forms of credit noted above.
- ◆ Teams have been given U.S.D.E. guidelines for evaluating clock hour to credit hour conversions.

✚ **The institution must** make available to enrolled and prospective students the names of agencies that accredit, approve or license the institution and its programs, and the procedures by which documents describing the activity of accrediting, licensing, or approving may be reviewed. The institution must make available to any student or prospective student a copy of the documents that describe an institution's accreditation and its State, Federal or tribal approval or licensing. The institution must also provide students with contact information for filing complaints with the institution's accreditor and licensing/approval agency.³ (§668.43)

- ◆ The evaluation team will examine the institution's means of providing to any student or prospective student information about its accrediting bodies and governmental licensing or approval bodies, copies of documents describing an institution's accreditation or governmental approval, as well as contact information with all such agencies for filing complaints with such bodies.
- ◆ The team report will describe the institution's compliance with this federal requirement.

✚ **The accreditor** has standards that effectively address success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission, including as appropriate consideration of course completion, State licensing examinations, and job placement rates. (§602.16)

- ◆ The evaluation team will examine institutional summary data on course completion rates, licensure pass rates and job placement rates where available, and examine program/certificate completion data and graduation data provided by the college.
- ◆ The ACCJC has built required data templates into its new Manual for Institutional Self Evaluation.
- ◆ The evaluation team will use this evidence in evaluating how well the institution fulfills its mission.

✚ **The accreditor** must demonstrate that it applies a set of monitoring approaches that allow it to identify institutional strengths and stability. These approaches must include collection and analysis of key data, including fiscal information and measures of student achievement. (CFR §602.19 and §602.16)

- ◆ Evaluation teams must examine the institution's longitudinal data, including significant changes in revenues and enrollments, and identify any team concerns about fiscal stability.
- ◆ Evaluation teams must examine the institution's longitudinal data on student achievement and identify any team concerns about stability and achievement of mission, as well as any trends that identify strengthened institutional performance.

✚ Finally, new regulations that required institutions to demonstrate that the graduates of their programs are gainfully employed and require accreditors to use this data in evaluation reports **have been blocked by litigation**. ACCJC will not enforce these regulations at this time. ◆



³ The regulations requiring all state governments to develop and implement a process of approving institutions to operate has been delayed in implementation by one year, until July 1, 2012. There are at least two challenges to this regulation being forwarded. The U.S.D.E. has granted institutions a delay of one year as states try to provide this licensure function. Nevertheless, the requirement that institutions identify for students the process for filing a complaint against the institution with a state licensing agency is NOT delayed, and was effective July 1, 2011.

Annual Reports Reveal College Progress and Challenges Ahead

Progress on Student Learning Outcomes: The Commission’s preliminary analysis of Institutional Annual Report data from the 2010-11 academic year indicate that colleges have made great progress in defining intended student learning outcomes (SLOs). Over 100 institutions have identified SLOs for more than 80% of their courses, programs, support services and institutional outcomes/degrees. However, assessment of SLOs is proceeding at a much slower rate. The number of colleges with more than 80% of their assessment completed is significantly lower. The data are summarized in the table below.

SLO DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT SUMMARY		
Category	# with more than 80% <u>defined</u> SLOs	# with more than 80% <u>assessed</u> SLOs
Courses	116	38
Programs	109	47
Student Support Services	114	77
Institutional SLOs	117	56

The deadline for achieving proficiency on the ACCJC’s Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness, Part III: Student Learning Outcomes is the fall 2012. The data above indicate that institutions face a challenge to complete assessment of learning outcomes, incorporate the results of assessment into institutional quality reviews and improvements in order to reach the “proficiency” level by the deadline set by the Commission.

Improving Student Achievement: ACCJC member institutions report their course completion rates range from less than 60% to more than 80%, with the majority of colleges reporting rates in the range of 66% to 75%. Institutions report their persistence rates range from less than 40% to over 81%. However, most colleges report their persistence in the range of 45% to 60%.

Accreditation Self Evaluation Reports now require institutions to compare year-to-year data on course completion, persistence and other measures of student success. Best practices in higher education ask that colleges evaluate their own effectiveness, and set goals or targets for improvement. Nationally, there are strong expectations that institutions improve student completion rates. The Commission intends to periodically examine and summarize region-wide data on student completion.

Facing Economic Challenges: The Commission’s analysis of the 2010 Annual Fiscal Report (AFR) indicate the increased fiscal stress on institutions. 18 ACCJC member colleges reported reserves of less than 5% of the annual unrestricted expenditures, as required by the ACCJC. A comparison of AFR 2009 to FY 2010 revealed that the number of colleges with low ending balances (less than \$1.5 million) increased from 67 to 70. The number of colleges with reserve levels of less than 5% (the required minimum) increased from 6 to 18, and the number of colleges reporting reserves of greater than 10% decreased from 88 to 77.

Additionally 18 colleges reported enrollment decreases of more than 5% and another 39 reported decreases in the range of 0% to 5%. However 20 colleges reported enrollment increases of more than 10%. Student Loan default rates have slowly increased from an average of 8.89% in FY 2007-08 to 9.2% in FY 2008-09 to 9.32% in FY 2009-10. The number of colleges with default rates in excess of the federal maximum of 20% increased from 2 to 8 in the same period.

This ACCJC’s analysis of the last two annual fiscal reports illustrates a decline in the fiscal condition of member institutions.

ACCJC Monitoring: Colleges submit an Annual Report and an Annual Fiscal report to the ACCJC each spring. Both reports enable the ACCJC to meet its federal regulatory obligation to monitor institutions between accreditation visits and to identify colleges that are “at risk.” The Annual Report includes information related to enrollments, completion and persistence rates, degree and certificate achievement, transfer rates, licensure pass rates, and job placement rates for Career and Technical programs. Additionally, the report summarizes the college progress in developing and assessing student learning outcomes. The Annual Fiscal Report gathers such information as ending balance, financial reserves, enrollments, and annual external audit results. ♦

Future Comprehensive Visits

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding the institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo comprehensive visits in the spring of 2012, the fall of 2012, and the spring of 2013 and review by the Commission at its June 2012, January 2013 and June 2013 meetings. Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to the ACCJC President, Dr. Barbara A. Beno, at 10 Commercial Blvd. Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. For consideration, such comment must be made in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting.

SPRING 2012

(for June 2012 Commission Review)

Barstow College
City College of San Francisco
Defense Language Institute
Feather River College
Guam Community College
Hawai'i Tokai International College
Los Angeles Harbor College
Los Angeles Southwest College
West Los Angeles College

FALL 2012

(for January 2013 Commission Review)

Bakersfield College
Cerro Coso Community College
College of the Sequoias
Hawai'i Community College
Heald College (12 campuses)
Honolulu Community College
Kapi'olani Community College
Kaua'i Community College
Leeward Community College
Northern Marianas College
Porterville College
Windward Community College
Woodland Community College
Yuba Community College

SPRING 2013

(for June 2013 Commission Review)

Coastline College
Copper Mountain College
Gavilan College
Golden West College
Hartnell College
Imperial Valley College
Los Angeles County College of Nursing
Los Angeles Mission College
Los Angeles Pierce College
Los Angeles Valley College
Orange Coast College
San Joaquin Valley College
Carrington College of California



Upcoming Events & Future Directions

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE

The theme of the November 17-19, 2011, conference is "Mission Possible: Success—Equity—Access." ACCJC will organize a panel to present and discuss developments on the national scene regarding federal regulations, issued by the U.S. Department of Education, and their present and future impact on accreditation for two-year colleges. The workshop will be held on Friday November 18. The conference will be held at the San Jose Fairmont. More information can be found on the CCLC website at: www.ccleague.org. ♦

Accreditation Institute

The ACCJC is pleased to partner with the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges in preparation for the ASCCC's Accreditation Institute. The Institute will be held February 10 and 11, 2012, at the Sheraton Park Hotel, Anaheim Resort. This year the Institute will assist faculty and administrative leaders alike as they navigate the waters of writing their institution's Self Evaluation Report.

Appropriately titled "From Product to Process: Accreditation for the Common Good," the Institute will examine ways of addressing assessment and 'closing the loop' in order to meet the proficiency level for student learning outcomes as indicated on the ACCJC Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness, Part III.

The Institute will not replace the ACCJC training; rather, it will supplement the knowledge needed for a robust self evaluation. As always, there will be opportunities throughout the Institute to ask questions, raise issues and concerns, create action plans for your campus, share strategies with colleagues from across the State, and develop a network of support.

Registration is open to faculty, Accreditation Liaison Officers, and all chief instructional officers. ♦

New Directions in Member Services

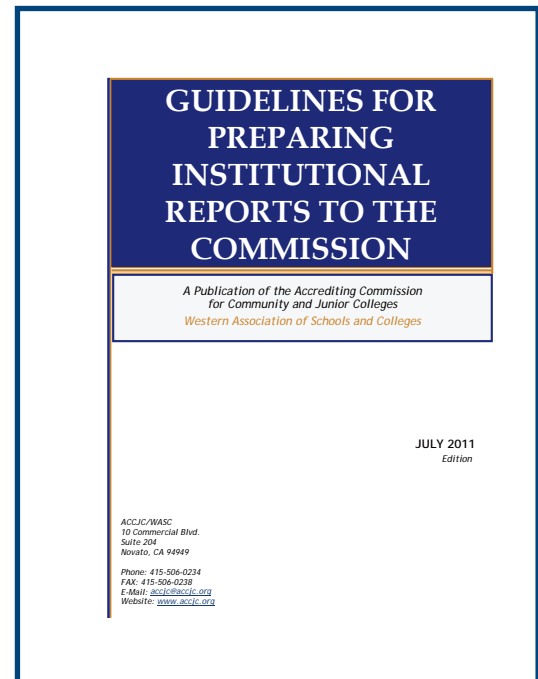
The ACCJC has completed its association with the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU) to participate in the Academic Resource Conference (ARC). ACCJC member institutions have informed us that in the current fiscal climate, the cost and time invested in ARC were not providing sufficient returns or benefit. They told us that single-day events focusing on two-year-college-relevant issues and held in nearby venues would be more beneficial and cost-effective. The ACCJC believes it can better meet institutional needs through drive-in regional workshops held throughout the WASC region.

- ▶ **Regional Workshops, "Building Capacity for Educational Excellence: Elements of Effective Program Review and Integrated Planning."** The workshop features a presentation on ACCJC Standards and then presentations by two or more institutions which have successfully demonstrated excellent practice, followed by a general sharing of practices and ideas. To date, 64 institutions and 295 individuals have benefited from the workshops, which have been offered at Mt. San Antonio College, Hawai'i Tokai International College, West Valley College, and College of the Canyons. Upcoming regional workshops are scheduled by invitation at Modesto Junior College, San Diego Mesa College, and Carrington College of California through the spring of 2012.
- ▶ Beginning in fall 2012, future Regional Workshops will examine good practices in learning outcomes assessment and use of assessment results to inform institutional decision making.
- ▶ **Regional ALO/CIO Workshops.** The first regional ALO/CIO workshop was held September 23 at Norco College. Sixty-six representatives from 55 institutions attended. The workshop consisted of two parts: (1) a briefing for experienced ALOs/CIOs on recent federal developments and Commission requirements, and (2) training for new ALOs/CIOs focusing on the roles of the ALO in campus communication, accreditation, fostering a campus culture that values student learning and achievement, and facilitating institutional reports to the Commission. Participants shared common concerns, best practices, challenges, and solutions. The PowerPoint presentation from this workshop is available on the ACCJC website under Other Resources/ACCJC Conference Presentations.
- ▶ ACCJC will repeat the regional ALO/CIO Workshop in spring 2012 for institutions that were unable to attend the September workshop. Watch for news on the date and place! ♦

ACCJC Releases New Publication

This summer, ACCJC released a new publication, *Guidelines for Preparing Institutional Reports to the Commission*. This Guide describes the required sections of Midterm, Follow-Up, and Special Reports; instructions for report submissions; and sample title and certification pages. It can be found on the ACCJC website under College Reports to ACCJC (<http://www.accjc.org/college-reports-accjc>).

Institutional reports to the Commission can occur at any time between comprehensive visits. A **Midterm Report** is required of all institutions in the third year following the comprehensive evaluation team visit. A **Follow-Up Report** is required when an institution must provide evidence that demonstrates it has addressed recommendations identified in an evaluation team report, resolved the deficiencies, and now meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies associated with those recommendations. When the Commission receives information that raises significant concerns about an institution, a **Special Report** is required to provide information about the institution that the Commission will specify in a letter. All reports to the Commission must be supported with evidence that document the information provided in the report. ♦



ALO & CIO Discussion Board

Based on requests from our member institutions, the Commission has launched a Discussion Board for Accreditation Liaison Officers (ALOs) and Chief Instructional Officers (CIOs) on the ACCJC website. The Discussion Board is a virtual meeting platform where ALOs and CIOs can meet to discuss issues that relate to assurance of educational quality and institutional performance and to share good practices in these areas. The Discussion Board will be organized by the following topics: the accreditation process, developing and managing evidence, updates on federal regulations, program review and planning, SLOs and assessment, campus communication, distance education, and substantive change. There will also be an open topics section where users may post about topics not otherwise classified. The Discussion Board is only accessible to ALOs and CIOs and will not be driven, monitored, or moderated by ACCJC staff. It is a space for ALOs and CIOs to initiate discussions that they consider to be important and relevant. ACCJC expects that the site will be used in this spirit and that care will be taken to share and upload only correct and useful information. ♦

Online Accreditation Basics Course

Since its launch this summer, the online Accreditation Basics course has enrolled approximately 20 individuals from member institutions per week. The course is intended for first-time external evaluation team members, for those who are going to be involved in accreditation at their institutions and wish to learn more about the process, and for those who want to brush up their understanding of the basic principles of accreditation. The 90-minute course focuses on the purposes of accreditation, the process used to accredit institutions, and the particular Standards used by the ACCJC to measure the educational quality and institutional effectiveness.

You can access and register for the course on the ACCJC website (www.accjc.org) on the Events page under ACCJC Accreditation Training. The course can be paused at any time and resumed to fit the scheduling needs of users. Quizzes will assess the user's progress through the course at regular intervals, and an end-of-course exam should be completed at 90% mastery in order to be successful in the course. A certificate will be issued to all who qualify. ♦



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