



NEW STANDARDS AND NEW PROCESSES THE EVOLUTION OF ACCREDITATION

**Dr. Norv Wellsfry
Associate Vice President, ACCJC
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THE 2014 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: A FOCUS ON QUALITY AND IMPROVEMENT

Quality is defined as institutional characteristics and processes that support and improve student learning and student achievement so that institutional mission is achieved



WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT ACCREDITATION?

- Students and learning:
accreditation focuses an institution on the elements of institutional operations that impact Students & Learning
- Holds institutions to high standards for work and institution's outcomes
- Review validates the hard work done to educate students



PURPOSES OF ACCREDITATION

- Provide **quality assurance** to the public and students, as well as to federal and state governments
- Provide impetus for **institutional improvement** and support for educational excellence
- Help higher education become more **effective**



ORGANIZATION OF ACCREDITATION

- Accrediting agencies: *Membership* entities with requirements of “members” (Standards)
- Regional Accreditors: evaluate the **whole institution** in geographic regions – *Western Association*, Southern Association, etc.
- Accreditation is **non-governmental**, *peer* review
- Accreditation is **voluntary**-institutions voluntarily submit to requirements, evaluators are volunteers



MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Standards and evaluations applied to institutions in the context of its mission
- Self-assessment by Institutions to maintain and improve quality
- Feedback from evaluation teams and the Commission used for **improvements**, to **meeting standards** and to **excel** in producing educated students



ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

- Standard I: Mission, Institutional Effectiveness and **Integrity (new)**
- Standard II: Educational Programs – Instruction, Library and Learning Services, and Student Support Services
- Standard III: Institutional Resources – Human Resources, Physical Resources, Technology and Financial Resources
- Standard IV: Leadership and Decision Making, and Governance



SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE STANDARDS

- Simplified format
- Reduced redundancies and clarified language
- Linked with Eligibility Requirements
- New emphasis on results (Student Achievement)
- Improvement throughout the institution
- New Standard on Institutional Integrity (I.C)



NEW PRACTICES

- Seven-Year Cycle with Midterm in year 4
- Quality Focus Essay
- Actionable Improvements Plans (coming from the institution's comprehensive self evaluation)
 - Incorporated into existing institutional planning processes;
 - Improvements made should be noted

Continued



NEW PRACTICES – 2

- New Midterm Report format
 - ✓ Analysis of data trends from Annual Reports and Annual Fiscal Reports
 - ✓ Improvement recommendations
 - ✓ Status of 2-3 significant quality improvement projects described in Quality Focus Essay

Continued



NEW PRACTICES – 3

- Individual College Monitoring and Follow-Up of Data Indicators in **Annual Reports** (required by USDE)
 - √ ACCJC provides the templates in the Annual Report which carry over to the Midterm
 - √ Institution is asked to describe any additional institution-set standards (data elements)



NEW PRACTICES – 4

- Types of recommendations:
 - **Compliance**
 - **Improvement**
 - ✓ Separated in action letters
 - ✓ Standards are met or not met (no “partial” compliance)
 - ✓ Non-compliance resolved in two years; improvement efforts continue throughout the 7-year cycle



CHANGES TO POLICY

- Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions
 - √ Reaffirmation for one year (new option)
 - √ Requirement of compliance within two years (federal two-year rule)
 - √ Changed timeline for Commission follow-up (generally 18 months)
 - √ Common definitions for sanctions across all all regional accreditors



CHANGES TO TRAININGS

- Spring 2015 Symposium
- ACCJC Annual Conference (October 2016)
 - Conference session on Developing a Self Evaluation Report *one year before* evaluation visit
 - Conference sharing session on “What Happens After the Evaluation Visit”



STANDARD I: MISSION, ACADEMIC QUALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND INTEGRITY

CRITICAL THEMES IN STANDARD I



1: QUALITY

- The word “quality” appears 9 times in Standard I
 - What *quality* is your college known for?
 - What local processes have led to improvements in institutional quality?



2: MISSION

- Mission drives planning – So?
 - Can a college's mission be defined so broadly that it provides no guidance in planning?
 - How are parts of mission defined so they can be assessed?



3: DATA

- *Quantitative and qualitative data,*
 - Analysis
 - Continuous and systematic *evaluation*
 - Relationship of quantitative & qualitative data



4: INSTITUTION SET STANDARDS

- new **Federal requirement** – Feb 2013
- *Institutional* and *Program* achievement
 - Course completion,
 - Degrees, Certificates (Numbers or Rates)
 - Transfer rates
 - CTE – licensure/certification exam pass rates, job placement



5: DISAGGREGATION

- “The institution disaggregates and analyzes learning outcomes and achievement for **subpopulations** of students.
Improvement strategies implemented when performance gaps identified
- An institution selects subpopulations critical to understanding whether mission is achieved



6: BROAD COMMUNICATION

- “The institution broadly communicates the results of all of its assessment and evaluation activities...”
- Assessment data is provided to the public
- Level of Reporting?
 - Too little?
 - Too much?



STANDARD II: STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES



STANDARD II: STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

II.A – Instructional Programs

II.B – Library and Learning Support Services

II.C – Student Support Services



II.A. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS



II.A.1: Instructional Programs

- New emphasis on **student attainment and achievement** as well as **SLOs**
- Achievement of degrees, certifications, employment or transfer.

II.A.2. Faculty (full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty)

- New emphasis identifies the actors instead of generally stating “the institution”
- New emphasis on continuous improvement (rather than episodic activities)



II.A.5. Degrees and Programs

- Length, breadth, depth, rigor, course sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning.
- minimum degree requirements:
 - **Associate** = 60 semester credits or equivalent
 - **Baccalaureate** = 120 credits or equivalent (ER 12)
- **All of the Accreditation Standards apply to baccalaureate degrees, but some specific references in the 2014 Standards**
- The ACCJC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for approving a baccalaureate degree at a member institution through substantive change.
Substantive change criteria give additional information to institutions about the review of a proposed BA.



New Standards

II.A.6. The institution schedules courses in a manner that allows students to complete certificate and degree programs within a period of time consistent with established expectations in higher education. (ER 9)

II.A.9. credit, degrees and certificates based on student attainment of learning outcomes. clock-to-credit-hour conversions. (ER 10)

- This requirement has existed in policy and federal regulations
Now been added to the standards



II.A.11. Program Learning Outcomes

- learning outcomes for programs of any type or length.
- “appropriate to the program level.” -- different in a short term program versus an AA or BA degree.
- For many institutions, these outcomes are contained in identified institutional learning outcomes (ILOs).



II.B. LIBRARY AND LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES



II.B. Library and Learning support Services

- Sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to support educational programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education.
- Learning support services include
 - library collections
 - tutoring learning centers
 - computer laboratories
 - learning technology
 - ongoing instruction for uses of library and other learning support services. (ER 17)



II.C. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES



II.C.3. The institution **assures equitable access** to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method. (ER 15)



II.C.4. Co-curricular programs and athletic programs (new)

- suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the social and cultural dimensions of the educational experience of its students.
- conducted with sound educational policy and standards of integrity.
- Institution has responsibility for the control of these programs, including their finances.
 - Note the linkage of co-curricular programs and athletics programs to the institution's mission.



II.C.5. Counseling and academic advising

- The institution provides counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success
- programs orient students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.



II.C.6. The institution has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs. The institution defines and advises students on clear pathways to complete degrees, certificates, and transfer goals. *(New)*

- **Be sure to include baccalaureate degrees, if offered.**



STANDARD III: RESOURCES



STANDARD III

THEMES OF CHANGES

- Improve clarity
- Improve planning
 - Recognize role and importance of part time and adjunct faculty in processes
 - Expand recognition of comprehensive nature of planning considerations (TCO)
- Reorganize and restructure (especially III.D)



III.A: HUMAN RESOURCES

- III.A.5: The institution assures the effectiveness of its human resources by **evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals**. Evaluation processes seek to assess **effectiveness** of personnel and encourage improvement. Actions taken following evaluations are **formal, timely, and documented**.



- III.A.6 (**formerly III.A.1.c**): The evaluation of faculty, academic administrators, and other personnel directly responsible for student learning includes, as a **component of that evaluation**, consideration of how these employees use the **results of the assessment of learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning.** [**reworded for clarity**]



III.B: PHYSICAL RESOURCES

- III.B.1: The institution assures **safe and sufficient physical resources at all locations** where it offers courses, programs, and learning support services.
- III.B.2: The institution plans, **acquires or builds**, maintains, and upgrades or replaces its physical resources, including facilities, equipment, land, and other assets, in a manner that **assures effective utilization and the continuing quality** necessary to support its programs and services and achieve its mission. [*regardless of manner in which physical assets are acquired by institution.*]



- III.B.4: Long-range capital plans support institutional improvement goals and reflect projections of the **total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment.**



III.C: TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

- III.C.1: **Technology** services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software are **appropriate and adequate** to support the institution's management and **operational functions, academic programs, teaching and learning, and support services.**
- III.C.2: The institution continuously **plans for, updates and replaces** technology to ensure its technological **infrastructure, quality and capacity** are adequate to support its mission, operations, programs, and services.



- III.C.3: The institution assures that **technology resources** at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are implemented and maintained to assure reliable access, safety, and security.
- III.C.4: The institution provides **appropriate instruction** and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators, in the **effective use of technology** and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations.
- III.C.5: The institution has policies and procedures that guide the **appropriate use of technology** in the teaching and learning processes.



D. Financial Resources: (Restructure for clarity)

- Planning (1-3)
- Fiscal Responsibility and Stability (4-10)
- Liabilities (including coming into compliance when federal government identifies deficiencies) (11-15)
- Contractual Agreements (16)



III.D: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- III.D.1: The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that **ensures financial stability. (ER 18)**
- III.D.2: The institution's mission and goals are the foundation for financial planning, and financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning.
- III.D.4: Institutional planning **reflects a realistic assessment of financial resource availability**, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements.



- III.D.9: The institution has sufficient cash flow **and reserves to maintain stability**, support strategies for appropriate risk management, and, when necessary, **implement contingency plans** to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.
- III.D.11: The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both **short-term and long-term financial solvency**. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The institution clearly identifies, plans, and **allocates resources for payment of liabilities and future obligations**.



- III.D.12: The institution plans for and allocates appropriate resources for the payment of liabilities and future obligations, including **Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)**, compensated absences, and other employee related obligations. The **actuarial plan** to determine Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) is current and prepared as required by appropriate accounting standards.
- III.D.15: The institution **monitors and manages student loan default rates**, revenue streams, and assets to **ensure compliance with federal requirements**, including **Title IV** of the Higher Education Act, and comes into compliance when the federal government identifies deficiencies.



STANDARD IV: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE



IV.A: DECISION MAKING ROLES AND PROCESSES

- IV.A.1: Leaders create and encourage innovation leading to excellence.
- IV.A.4: Faculty and academic administrators, through policy and procedures, and through well-defined structures, have responsibility for recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services.



- IV.A.6 (**NEW**): The **processes** for decision-making and the **resulting decisions** are **documented** and widely **communicated** across the institution.
- IV.A.7: Leadership **roles** and the institution's governance and decision-making policies, procedures, and processes are **regularly evaluated** to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and **uses them as the basis for improvement.**



IV.B: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

- IV.B.1: The institutional chief executive officer (**CEO**) **has primary responsibility** for the quality of the institution.
- IV.B.3: Through established policies and procedures, the CEO guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by:
 - Ensuring college sets Institutional Performance Standards
 - Integrating Institutional educational planning with resource planning and allocations
 - Evaluating institutional planning and implementation



- IV.B.4:(**NEW**) The **CEO has the primary leadership role for accreditation**, ensuring that the institution **meets or exceeds** Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission **policies at all times. Faculty, staff, and administrative leaders** of the institution **also have responsibility** for assuring compliance with accreditation requirements.



IV.C: GOVERNING BOARD

- IV.C.1: The institution has a governing board that has **authority over and responsibility** for policies to assure the **academic quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning** programs and services and the **financial stability** of the institution. **(ER 7)**
- IV.C.2: The governing board acts as a **collective entity**. Once the board reaches a decision, all board members **act in support of the decision**.



- IV.C. 8: To ensure the institution is accomplishing its goals for student success, the governing **board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement** and institutional plans for **improving academic quality. (NEW)**
- IV.C. 10: Board policies and/or bylaws clearly establish a process **for board evaluation. The results are used to improve board performance, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness.**