



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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June 21, 2013

MEMO TO: Chief Executive Officers, Accreditation Liaison Officers

FROM: Krista Johns, JD 

SUBJECT: June 2013 Commission Action on Policies

Through Commission processes, the Policy Committee oversees the development of new policies and changes to existing policies. Commission procedures require that any proposed institutional policy changes and/or new policies be considered by the Commission in a two-meeting process. At the first meeting, new policies/policy changes are discussed and modifications are made as appropriate (i.e., "first reading"). These policies are then circulated to ACCJC accredited institutions via email and other interested parties via online posting for review and comment before presentation at the next Commission meeting for second reading and adoption.

First Reading Policies: At its June 2013 meeting, the Commission considered and approved three institutional policies for first reading; one new policy and two revisions. Changes to existing policies are noted in *italic* (additions) and ~~strikethrough~~ (deletions). New policies are all *italic*. As a part of the ongoing policy review process, terminology has been changed in all reviewed policies as necessary to align with current usage of terms in the *Manual for Institutional Self Evaluation*.

The policies approved for first reading include:

- **Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance**

The new Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance highlights the periodic (annual) monitoring of key indicators as required by U.S. Department of Education (USDE) regulations. This area of accreditation practice and reporting by colleges will be more transparent to member institutions and interested others with the creation of a stand-alone policy on the subject.

- **Policy on Credit for Prior Experiential Learning in Undergraduate Programs (Policy on Direct Assessment of Learning)**

In the course of its ongoing review of Commission policies, the committee determined this policy had become out of date since its last revision in 2009. There has been a great deal of movement on the subject of direct assessment of learning over the past several years, and the USDE recently clarified its expectations related to direct assessment programs, which may include prior experiential learning. The policy has been renamed and revised with these factors in mind. It should be noted that several other Commission policies also address direct assessment programs, including the Policy on Substantive Change, Policy on Award of Credit, and Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits.

- **Policy on the Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions**

This policy is returned for first reading consideration. During minor clean-up revisions to the Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions, it was determined that a separate section on third party comment would be helpful to the member institutions and to the public. The section pulls materials that were previously found in several other policies and records them together in this section.

The policies considered for first reading as well as the adopted policies and organizational documents were attached to an electronic version of this correspondence emailed to Chief Executive Officers and Accreditation Liaison Officers. The policies can also be found on the website www.accjc.org under 'Recent Commission Actions,' 'Actions on Policy.'

Comments may be made in written, FAX, or e-mail format and sent to one of the following addresses:

- E-mail: kjohns@accjc.org
- FAX: 415-506-0238
- Mail: ACCJC
10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204
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The Commission invites comment on these important policy matters.

Adopted Institutional Policies: Information about revisions to the nine policies listed below was circulated to member institutions and posted on accjc.org in February 2013. Comment on the policies was invited through April 5, 2013; however, the Commission received no comments on these policies. At its June 2013 meeting, the Commission considered for second reading and then adopted the institutional policies listed below:

- **Policy on Substantive Change**
- **Policy on Institutional Integrity and Ethics**
- **Policy on the Award of Credit**
- **Policy on Representation of Accredited Status**
- **Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions**
- **Policy on Review of Commission Actions**
- **Policy on Public Disclosure and Confidentiality in the Accreditation Process**
- **Policy on Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions**
- **Policy on Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems**

Operational Policies and Bylaws: The Commission considered and adopted revisions to two operational policies and the ACCJC Bylaws, and one new operational policy. Operational policies are not circulated to the field for comment prior to final approval. Upon approval, they are included in the Commission's report on Recent Commission Actions on Policy, and are posted online in the

Accreditation Reference Handbook. The operational documents reviewed and approved at the June 2013 Commission meeting are:

- **Statement on the Process for Preserving Confidentiality of Documents Related to Institutional Evaluations**

The new Statement on the Process for Preserving Confidentiality of Documents Related to Institutional Evaluations provides procedural clarification for implementing the policy obligations of Commissioners, team members, and others related to institutional evaluations.

- **Policy on Professional and Ethical Responsibilities of Commission Members**

The Policy on Professional and Ethical Responsibilities of Commission Members has been revised to include a new section on responsibilities of Commissioner confidentiality in reviewing institutions, and to clarify the communication role of Commissioners.

- **Policy on Conflict of Interest for Commissioners, Evaluation Team Members, Consultants, Administrative Staff, and Other Commission Representatives**

The revised Policy on Conflict of Interest for Commissioners, Evaluation Team Members, Consultants, Administrative Staff, and Other Commission Representatives has two new sections: the first, on avoiding the appearance of conflict of interest; and the second, on suspension or removal of an individual for which a conflict of interest cannot be resolved.

- **ACCJC Bylaws—Report on Action Taken**

The ACCJC Bylaws were amended on May 10, 2013 by the Commission via an electronic vote in accordance with Bylaws. The amendments clarified two items in the language of the Bylaws. First, the language concerning scope of accreditation was changed to specify that all certificate and degree credentials offered by a member institution are included in the ACCJC accreditation. Second, the description of the process for election of new Commissioners was corrected to explain that notification to the member institutions about the process of election and the available openings is made by the Commission. These changes did not alter ACCJC practice, but instead provided clarity about the practices in Bylaws.

Edits to Policy: Two Commission policies were edited. Edits to correct inputting errors, grammar, and punctuation may be completed at any time and are effective when made. Edits to improve readability and clarity without altering the meaning of policy language, and edits required for full compliance with federal or state regulations, become effective upon Commission approval of the Policy Committee's report and posting of the changes on the ACCJC website.

The following edited policies were approved as part of the Policy Committee report at the June 2013 Commission meeting.

- **Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions**
- **Policy on Access to Commission Meetings**

The Commission welcomes your thoughts on ACCJC policy matters.