

# Accreditation and Effective Trusteeship

A Presentation to the  
Community College League of California's  
Effective Trusteeship Workshop

by

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# First, Some Accreditation Basics...

# Key Concepts in Accreditation

- Accreditation is **voluntary and institution-based**
  - Institutions formed regional commissions, set up standards, set up the Commission decision making body, and accepted responsibility for meeting standards and participating in revision of standards
  - Institutions agreed to be **self-regulating**
  - Institutions **agreed to accept** the findings and (where useful) the advice of the peer review process
- Federal government **criteria for financial aid** are imposed over/on accreditation processes

# Accreditation Changes with Time

- Standards evolve, are reviewed and revised
- Institutional practices change (e.g., DE, unbundling, student success legislation)
- Evaluators gain experience and understanding, insights, and improve (or change) their practices
- National dialogue and debates fuel emphasis of some elements of standards (e.g., loan default, equity)
- Federal regulatory requirements change with new negotiated rulemaking, guidelines or legislation and accreditation changes in response

# What is Institutional Quality?

- **The credentials awarded to students are highly regarded by those outside the institution – employers, other colleges and universities, students themselves**
- The institution is effective at achieving its purpose(s) – it can demonstrate it has done so
- The institution is efficient in providing an education to students – it doesn't waste students' or its own resources or time doing so

# What Helps Ensure Educational Quality?

- **A defined mission and organizational focus on mission**
- Educational services and support services
- Honesty and Integrity in the institution's operations
- Qualified staff in all areas
- Faculty roles as teachers, designers of curriculum
- Functional governance focused on educational mission
- Adequate and well managed resources including financial and physical resources
- A culture and practice of assessment and improvement
- Many other elements contained in the Accreditation Standards

# Congressional Attention is on Outcomes

House Education and the Workforce Committee  
(Nov. 13, 2013),

- “we used to have a system based on access, but this has now changed. Reforms that drive the nation toward completion rates should be strongly considered. There are certain programs that are currently too open ended and hinder completion. Restructuring the financial aid programs to incentivize completion is important.”

(Representative Messer, R, IN)

# Congressional Interests, *continued*

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Committee (Nov. 14, 2013),

“The economic future and stability of the United States is dependent on making college affordable, accessible and results-oriented.”

Chairman and Senator Harkin, D, IA

# National Demands for “Improvements”

1. Improvements in student learning, and in their accumulated and demonstrated knowledge and skills upon completion – i.e., student competencies
2. Improvements in the number of completers
3. Improvements in the completion of diverse populations
4. Improvements in affordability through efficiencies, reduction in costs.

# Accreditation Purposes, Processes and Standards

# The Purposes of Regional Accreditation

- Provide quality assurance to the public, to students, to other institutions that an institution is achieving its stated mission
- Give credibility to degrees and credentials awarded to students
- Stimulate institutional improvement through evaluation, planning, implementation and evaluation again

# The Quality Assurance Purpose of Accreditation

- Conduct regular reviews of quality (six-year cycle) through a comprehensive evaluation
- Monitor certain aspects of institutional quality **(USDE Regulations)**
  - Student Achievement/Institutional Effectiveness
  - Substantive Changes/Distance Learning
  - Financial Integrity/Financial Aid Issues
  - Integrity in Relation to Students, the Public
- Inform the USDE, Students the Public of Results
- Evaluation reports and visits as needed

# The Improvement Purpose of Accreditation

- The accreditation process is designed to help institutions focus on helping students learn what they are supposed to learn, and to complete courses, certificates, degrees, and transfer or get jobs
- The accreditation process builds institutional capacity for educational excellence and institutional effectiveness that produces desired forms of student success



# What is the Process for Comprehensive Review?

- Institutional self evaluation
- External evaluation by professional peers
- Commission evaluation -- the body of 19 Commissioners renders a judgment on the accreditation status of the institution
- A decision on accredited status
- Institutional Improvement if needed

***A Six-Year Cycle of Review***



# Who Are the Commissioners?

## Peers and the Public

- 5 Faculty from Member Institutions
- 3 Administrators from Member Institutions
- 1 from California Community Colleges System
- 1 from Pacific Institutions
- 1 from University of Hawaii System
- 1 ACSCU and 1 from ACS
- 1 from the private Member Institutions
- 5 representing the public

# What are the Accreditation Standards?

- **Standard I: Mission and Institutional Effectiveness**
  - Data-driven assessment and improvement, focus on learning
    - Requirement that an institution set standards for student achievement
- **Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services**
  - Instructional, Support and Learning Services, focus on learning and student outcomes
- **Standard III: Resources**
  - Deployment of resources toward achievement of mission, fiscal integrity maintained to insure continued operation
- **Standard IV: Leadership and Governance**
  - Leadership to *focus institution on mission and student success*, roles of governance structures, CEO and governing board

# Reading Resource

***U.S. Accreditation and the Future of Quality Assurance  
A Tenth Anniversary Report from the Council for Higher Accreditation***

Prepared by: Peter T. Ewell, 2008

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# Thank You For Your Attention

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