



DISCUSSION WITH EXPERTS IN THE FIELD

“WORKING DRAFT: PROPOSED REVISIONS TO STANDARDS”

Accrediting Commission for Community
and Junior Colleges, WASC

Fall 2013



PURPOSE FOR DISCUSSION OF WORKING DRAFT OF REVISIONS

- To examine the proposed revisions to Standards coming out of input and suggestions from across the field.
- To continue sharing the preliminary results of the input compilation with members of the field.
- For discussants to offer input and suggestions as to the compiled draft revisions to Accreditation Standards.



CONTEXT AND CONTENT FOR PROPOSED REVISIONS

- ACCJC Commission Study Sessions, March 2012, June 2012, January 2013, and March 2013
- Literature review and presentations by higher education experts
- Input from more than 250 members of the field, including individuals, public hearing participants (March, June, and September 2012), Accreditation Liaison Officers Training, Student Success Conference, and Task Forces: Distance Education, Student Learning Outcomes, Financial Review.



GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR STANDARDS REVIEW

1. How can the revised Standards move colleges toward increased emphasis on student outcomes?
2. How can the review and revision improve clarity in the structure of standards and eliminate unnecessary repetition?
3. To what extent and how should the Standards represent the best and current knowledge of effective practices in teaching and learning?



GUIDING QUESTIONS CONTINUED

4. To what extent and how should the Standards emphasize institutional transparency in data driven decision-making?
5. Should the Standards require colleges to define performance measures/benchmarks, against which they would assess progress toward student achievement and attainment of successful student outcomes?
6. To what extent and how should the Standards promote institutional integrity?



GUIDING QUESTIONS CONTINUED

7. How can the Standards require colleges to pursue equity in learning and achievement among diverse student groups?
8. To what extent and how should the Standards reflect a commitment to the value of core learning/general education within degrees and certificates?
9. How should the Standards reflect compliance with current federal regulations and policy directions?



RECURRING INPUT AND SUGGESTIONS RELATED TO STANDARDS

- The outline format contributes to complexity and redundancy.
- Standards should eliminate narrative for the Sub-Sections, listing only standards statements.
- Standards document should possibly reference Federal law, regulations and policies.



- Standards should be more explicit or directive about expectations for roles, responsibilities, and decision-making of colleges and district/system offices in multi-college districts.
- Standards should emphasize outcomes, resulting in less emphasis on process and more emphasis on accountability.



- Institutional self-evaluation should include student equity, vis-à-vis disaggregation of data.
- Institutional effectiveness should include baseline data, both quantitative and qualitative; there should be comparability across colleges.
- Increase emphasis and scope of general education requirements.



- Ensure expectations and requirements attendant to distance education, use of third party providers, and other educational elements at member institutions are clear; ask how the institution assures the quality of teaching and learning.
- Specify how SLO work should be incorporated into employee evaluations, and list affected constituencies specifically.



- Clarify language to specifically define expectations for a “policy” board, as opposed to a board engaged in operations.
- Improve clarity and add specificity for financial management Standards; increase specificity of expectations for systematic, ongoing assessment of fiscal capacity and processes to meet college mission and goals.



DISCUSSION:

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE STANDARDS

***[PLEASE REFER TO THE DRAFT DOCUMENT, WITH
HIGHLIGHTED SECTIONS]***



Organizational Changes in Standard I

- The Standard now features three sections: Mission, Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and Institutional Integrity.
- The section on Mission has been expanded, reflecting the foundational role mission plays in defining a college.
- Academic Quality has been singled out as a subsection, and it contains expectations for defining and assessing student performance and completion outcomes.
- Institutional Integrity is now a separate section, containing existing and new expectations for integrity and honesty in actions, communications, and policies.



Organizational Changes in Standard II

- Standard II has two major sections: Instructional Programs, and Student Support and Library and Learning Resources.
- The Instructional Programs section delineates responsibilities and expectations for assuring academic quality, and it sets expectations for degree requirements, including general education.
- The section on Student Support and Library and Learning Resources defines expectations affecting co-curricular programs and athletics, and it defines expectations for academic advising and student pathways to completion.



Organizational Notes for Standard III

- The Standard maintains four sections: Human Resources, Physical Resources, Technology Resources, and Financial Resources.
- Under the Human Resources section, expectations are defined for qualifications of all personnel who have responsibility for academic quality.
- The section on Financial Resources remains largely unchanged from its last revision in 2012.



Organizational Changes in Standard IV

- The Standard now has four sections: Decision-Making Roles and Processes, Chief Executive Officer, Governing Board, and Multi-College Districts or Systems.
- The sections define specific expectations for delineation and distinction of roles and responsibilities in governance.
- The section on Multi-College Districts or Systems defines specific expectations for the functional relationship between a district or system and a college.



THANK YOU

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Fall 2013

TO: Participants in Discussions of Proposed Revision to Standards
FROM: Barbara a. Beno, President *Barbara A Beno*
SUBJECT: Discussion of Proposed Accreditation Standards Revisions
by Field Experts

Informed by extensive, broad-based input from the field over the past two years the Commission, working through the Standards Review Committee and Commission staff, developed a preliminary draft of proposed revisions to the Accreditation Standards. At its June 2013 meeting, the Commission reviewed this draft and directed staff to solicit input from subject matter experts across the region before the Commission's official first reading at its January 2014 meeting. Following the first reading in January, the Commission will seek broad ACCJC member and public review, with the goal of a second reading and adoption at its June 2014 meeting. Final adoption in 2014 will culminate a three-year process of intensive study and review by the Commission and informed by comprehensive review and input from all ACCJC constituencies.

The draft of proposed revisions substantially maintains the principles and substance of the current Standards. However, a number of revisions feature changes that reflect national trends on matters of academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and student learning outcomes. In addition, the current draft revisions reflect a simpler format, responding to input from the field requesting less redundancy and complexity in format. The proposed revisions also reflect undivided input from the field that no wholesale changes to the Standards are necessary; this input supports the judgment of the Commission that the current Standards are largely effective and appropriate.

Below is a summary of some of the significant changes to content reflected in the draft of proposed revisions, presented by Standard. (Most of these changes are highlighted in the "**Working Draft: Proposed Revisions to Standards**" document you received for today's session.) We are asking you to focus first on areas of the draft that reflect your professional position and expertise, considering the following guiding questions:

1. Does the proposed format for revised Standards mitigate concerns about complexity and redundancy?
2. Do the proposed revisions in section(s) of the Standards representing your area of professional position and expertise reflect the considerations for changes you have identified?
3. Do the proposed revisions appropriately and effectively move the Standards to reflect the increased focus on institutional accountability for student learning and achievement?
4. What additional suggestions do you have for revisions?

Changes within the “Working Draft: Proposed Revisions to Standards”

Standard I

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Standard II

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Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the accreditation process.

BAB/mg

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Support Services

The institution offers instructional programs, student support services and learning resources aligned with its mission. The institution's programs are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate for higher education. The institution assesses its educational quality through methods accepted in higher education, makes the broad results of its assessments available to the public, and uses the results to improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness. The institution defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional and support services offered in the name of the institution.

A. Instructional Programs

1. All instructional programs are offered in fields of study consistent with the institution's mission, are appropriate to higher education and culminate in student attainment of identified programmatic student learning outcomes, degrees, certificates, employment or transfer to other higher education programs.
2. ***Faculty accept responsibility for ensuring that the content and methods of instruction meet generally accepted academic and professional standards and expectations. Faculty act to continuously improve instructional programs and services through processes informed by an understanding of what and how students are learning.***
3. Instructional programs are systematically evaluated to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated learning outcomes.
4. The institution demonstrates that all instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education, align with the mission⁴ of the institution and are conducted with integrity.
5. The institution identifies learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees using established institutional procedures. The institution has officially approved and current course outlines that include student learning outcomes. ***In every class section students receive a course syllabus that specifies learning outcomes identical with those in the institution's officially approved course outline.***
6. The institution assesses student learning, and uses assessment results to improve curriculum, teaching, and student learning.

7. ***Faculty and academic administrators have a central role in establishing quality and improving instructional courses and programs. These academic personnel use data pertinent to each field of study in identifying competency levels and measurable learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees.***
8. ***If the institution offers pre-collegiate level curriculum, it distinguishes that curriculum from college level curriculum and directly supports students in learning the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college level curriculum.***
9. The institution's degrees and programs follow practices common to American higher education and appropriate length, breadth, depth, rigor, course sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning. ***The institution ensures that minimum degree requirements are 60 semester credits (or 90 quarter credits) at the associate level, and 120 credits (or 180 quarter credits) at the baccalaureate level.***
10. ***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 for completion at two-year institutions.***
11. The institution effectively uses delivery modes, teaching methodologies and learning support services that reflect the diverse needs of its students.
12. The institution validates the effectiveness of department-wide course and/or program examinations, including direct assessment of prior learning. The institution ensures that these examinations are free of test bias and measure the intended learning outcomes.
13. The institution awards course credit, degrees and certificates based on student attainment of learning outcomes. Units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms or equivalencies in higher education. If the institution offers courses based on clock hours, it follows Federal standards for clock-to-credit-hour conversions.
14. The institution makes available to its students clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies in order to facilitate the mobility of students without penalty. In accepting transfer credits to fulfill degree requirements, the institution certifies that the expected learning outcomes for transferred courses are comparable to the learning outcomes of its own courses. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements as appropriate to its mission.⁵
15. The institution requires of all of its degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy that is clearly stated in its catalog and ***is comprised of least 18 semester units for associate degree***

and 36 units for the baccalaureate degree, or the equivalent. The institution, relying on faculty expertise, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum.

16. General education courses are selected to provide students with an understanding of the basic content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge, which are traditionally referred to as the arts and humanities, the sciences, including mathematics, and social sciences.
17. *Graduates of the institution's degree programs demonstrate, appropriate to their degree level, oral and written communication competency, information competency, computer literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning skills, critical analysis, logical thinking and the ability to acquire knowledge for life-long learning through a variety of means. In addition, graduates demonstrate an understanding of ethical principles, civility and interpersonal skills, understanding of cultural diversity, historical and aesthetic sensitivity, environmental sustainability, and the capacity to assume civic, political and social responsibilities locally and globally.*
18. All degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core.
19. Career-technical programs maintain currency through analyses of appropriate data. Graduates completing career-technical certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment standards and other applicable standards and preparation for external licensure and certification.
20. When programs are eliminated or program requirements are significantly changed, the institution makes appropriate arrangements so that enrolled students may complete their education in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.
21. The institution regularly evaluates the quality and improvement of all instructional programs offered in the name of the institution, including collegiate, pre-collegiate, and continuing and community education courses and programs, regardless of type of credit awarded, delivery mode, or location.

B. Student Support and Library and Learning Resources

Student Support

1. The institution regularly evaluates the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery,

including distance education and correspondence education, support student learning and enhance accomplishment of the mission of the institution.^{3,4}

2. The institution identifies and assesses learning support outcomes for its student population and provides appropriate student support services and programs to achieve those outcomes. The institution uses assessment data to continuously improve student support programs and services.
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.⁴
4. ***Co-curricular programs and athletics are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the social and cultural dimensions of the educational experience of its students. If the institution offers recreational and athletic programs, they are conducted with sound educational policy and standards of integrity. The institution has responsibility for the control of these programs, including their financial aspects. Educational programs and academic expectations are the same or higher for students athletes as for other students.***
5. The institution provides counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success and trains faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function. Counseling and advising 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.
6. ***The institution defines and advises students on clear pathways to complete degrees, certificate and transfer goals.***
7. The institution regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases.
8. The institution maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained. The institution publishes and follows established policies for release of student records.

Library and Learning Resources

9. The institution assures academic quality by providing library, learning resources, and other learning support services that are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to facilitate educational offerings, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education.⁴ Such services include library services and

collections, tutoring, learning centers, computer laboratories, and learning technology development and training.

10. The institution defines and assesses learning and other intended outcomes for library and learning resources and uses assessment data to continuously improve programs and services.
11. Relying on appropriate expertise of faculty, including librarians, and other learning support services professionals, the institution selects and maintains educational equipment and materials to support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission.
12. The institution provides ongoing instruction for users of library, learning resources, and other learning support services so that students are able to develop skills in information competency.
13. ***When the institution relies on or collaborates with other institutions or other sources for library and other learning support services for its instructional programs, it documents that formal agreements exist and that such resources and services are adequate for the institution's intended purposes, are easily accessible, and utilized. The performance of these services is evaluated on a regular basis. The institution takes responsibility for and assures the reliability of all services provided either directly or through contractual arrangement.***⁷

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and uses the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for sustaining academic quality, integrity, and continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are defined in policy and designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief executive officer. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution.

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

1. Institutional leaders create and encourage innovation, leading to institutional excellence. They support administrators, faculty, staff, and students, no matter what their official titles, in taking initiative for improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective planning and implementation.
2. *The institution establishes and implements written policy authorizing administrator, faculty, and staff participation in decision-making processes. The policy makes provisions for consideration of student views and judgments in those matters in which students have a direct and reasonable interest. Policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose committees.*
3. Administrators and faculty have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise.
4. Faculty and academic administrators, through well-defined structures and processes, have responsibility for recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services.
5. *Through its system of board and institutional governance, the institution ensures the appropriate consideration of relevant perspectives; decision-making aligned with expertise and responsibility; and timely action on institutional plans, policies, curricular change and other key considerations.*
6. The processes for decision-making and the resulting decisions are documented and widely communicated across the institution.
7. Leadership roles and the institution's governance and decision-making structures 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.