



Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges

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Press Release

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State Legislation Update – LD 1296 (Maine)

In November 2009, ACCSC began working with the Career College Association (CCA) and one of our accredited member institutions, New England School of Communications (NESCOM), regarding the state of Maine’s proposal (LD 1296) to define an “accredited Maine junior college, college or university” as an institution with regional accreditation.

In working directly with NESCOM, ACCSC formulated a response which emphasized our opposition to this exclusionary legislation that would be detrimental to the students served by ACCSC-accredited institutions located in the state of Maine. Our position centered around the importance of recognition by the United States Department of Education (USDE), and our feeling that the state’s proposal did not take into account the widely accepted validation that USDE recognition conveys. Of critical importance to our argument is our belief there is no basis for making distinctions on the antiquated terms of “regional” or “national” accreditation given that all agencies are held to the same rigorous process and criteria.

This week, ACCSC learned from NESCOM that the proposed regulation which defined an accredited Maine junior college, college, or university as having regional accreditation **had been removed**, and that any reference to an institution being accredited will mean being accredited by an agency that is recognized by the U. S. Secretary of Education. Suffice to say, this is a tremendous victory for NESCOM and other nationally accredited institutions in the state of Maine given that this change in position allows graduates from nationally accredited institutions to be eligible for participation in the state of Maine’s Opportunity Program. Under the Opportunity Program, those students who earn an associate or bachelor’s degree at a Maine school, and continue to live, work and pay taxes in Maine after graduation are eligible to be reimbursed for student loan payments through a state income tax credit. ACCSC was pleased to learn that during the legislative process representatives from the Maine Board of Education, specifically asked that the bill be amended to ensure that graduates from nationally accredited institutions be eligible for the Opportunity Program.

ACCSC staff is encouraged by this policy changed and will continue to advocate on behalf of our accredited member schools as we go forward.

