

Memorandum to ACCSC-Accredited Institutions

To: ACCSC-Accredited Institutions
From: Michale S. McComis, Ed.D., Executive Director
Subj.: Announcement of Special Task Force
Date: August 20, 2010

On August 6, 2010, I sent a [memorandum](#) to all ACCSC-accredited institutions in which I discussed the important role that accreditors play in establishing and enforcing rigorous standards in the areas of recruitment, advertising, and admissions practices. To that end and in light of the recent report of by the [Government Accountability Office](#) (GAO), ACCSC has established a special Task Force to evaluate the recruiting, advertising, and admissions practices at its accredited institutions. The work of the Task Force will take several forms – to include fact-finding on-site evaluations and other means of information gathering – in order to a) evaluate institutions and their recruiting, advertising, and admissions practices; b) recommend specific school actions as a result of these evaluations; and c) develop recommendations as to how the Commission might improve and strengthen its standards and enforcement practices.

In addition to the work of the Task Force, ACCSC on-site evaluation teams conducting accreditation reviews in the normal course will also assess more closely the practices of institutions in the areas of recruitment, advertising, and admissions. Although the Commission has always made the assessment of these areas an integral part of its on-site evaluations, the visiting teams will spend a greater amount of time and effort reviewing institutional compliance with the Commission's recruitment, advertising, and admissions standards.

Because ongoing self-evaluation and institutional improvement efforts should be the cornerstone of every accredited institution, the Commission expects that every school will conduct an internal assessment of its recruitment, advertising, and admissions practices; make corrections and improvements where necessary; and, in all instances, strive to engage only the highest ethical practices. In addition, the truly "good actors" must take up leadership roles in the for-profit community and model for the community the best practices that lead to institutional and student success.

As the membership of ACCSC-accredited institutions has heard me say on many occasions, ACCSC has always been committed to establishing and enforcing rigorous standards and to holding institutions accountable to those standards. While we have many examples of institutions that share the Commission's commitment, the seriousness of the GAO report and its implications cannot be ignored. As I stated in my testimony before the Senate HELP Committee, ACCSC believes, unequivocally, that any form of student recruiting or advertising practice that unduly induces students to enroll in an institution is in direct contradiction to the mission of ACCSC and is in direct violation of the Commission's established standards. Accordingly, the Commission will neither tolerate nor be held culpable for institutions that by their own action or inaction violate the Commission's standards.

The Commission expects that ACCSC-accredited institutions will embrace the work of the Task Force and provide full cooperation as may be required. The Commission also expects that institutions will give serious introspection to their operations and ensure that in all instances the interest of students comes first.

If any ACCSC-accredited institution has a question regarding the Commission's rules, standards, or requirements, the Commission is more than willing to provide assistance and to work with schools to achieve compliance. In addition, if any ACCSC-accredited institution has suggestions as to how the Commission might enhance its standards or process, the Commission is interested in hearing those suggestions. In either case, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 703.247.4520 or mccomis@accsc.org.