



▶ ACCSC'S NEWEST ACCREDITATION STANDARDS – WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? .. 1



▶ THE ENTRANCE INTERVIEW – AN ON-SITE EVALUATION BEST PRACTICE..... 2



▶ FAREWELL TO TIM WILLIAMS2
▶ SAVE THE DATE!2

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the Volunteer Source

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Teams will now focus on assessment strategies that go beyond the examination of graduation and employment to include assessment of an institution's ability to demonstrate successful student achievement through more diversified means.

A Breakdown of ACCSC's Newest Standard

On October 1, 2009, the Commission implemented new standards into *Section VII, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*, with regard to student learning, assessment, progress, and achievement. This change requires ACCSC on-site evaluation teams to think differently during their reviews. Outcomes assessment through the analysis of graduation and employment data is a cornerstone of the Commission's process to evaluate institutional effectiveness.

Outcomes assessment speaks to institutional accountability in terms of defined educational objectives. Outcomes assessment should evaluate the results of the educational process with a focus on what students, faculty, and school administrators do as part of this process and link accountability to the quality of the educational programs. On-site evaluation teams must now consider the

link between graduation and employment benchmarks and other institutional performance indicators. Accordingly, teams will now focus on assessment strategies that go beyond the examination of graduation and employment to include assessment of an institution's ability to *demonstrate* successful student achievement through more diversified means. The key areas of the new standards are outlined and discussed as follows:

• **The inclusion of a provision that institutions demonstrate a process for assessing student learning and student competency:**

Assessment requires attention to outcomes, but it also requires attention to the gradual acquisition of competencies by the student that lead to these outcomes. Within this context, institutions must demonstrate the *methodology* used for evaluating the extent to which student acquire the know-



ledge, skills and competencies set forth in the program objectives throughout the program.

• **A better description of the Commission's expectations regarding monitoring of student achievement:**

Assessment works best when it is *ongoing*. Outcomes are more likely to show improvement when the assessment process involves a series of activities undertaken over a period of time. Accordingly, the revisions should foster an enhanced understanding of monitoring student progress as a means of continuous improvement and when graduation and/or employment rates fall below the Commission's established benchmark.

(continued on page 2)....



GROWING RESOURCES

ACCSC's website is continuing to grow. In addition, to ACCSC's Monograph Series which can be found at www.accsc.org, check out the latest webinars "Preparing for the OnSite Evaluation: Strategies for Success" and "Preparing an Effective Response for Commission Consideration." Click [HERE](#) to access all the current webinars. Check back often over the next year as ACCSC continues to release additional Monograph Series brochures as well as develop and present additional Webinars.



The Entrance Interview

On-Site Evaluation Best Practices

Starting the on-site evaluation with an entrance interview is a means of modeling ACCSC's core value of open communication... and establishes a clear understanding of the expected process and procedure for conducting the review.

Imagine it has been five years since your school last hosted an ACCSC on-site evaluation team; or better yet, this is you or your school's very first accreditation review. After attending the accreditation workshop and working hard on perfecting the Self-Evaluation Report, everyone is proud of what was learned as a result and ready to showcase the school to the accreditation team. Before the on-site evaluation, the school staff will be wondering how the team will be, what the team will expect of the school, what kinds of questions they will ask, and how the on-site evaluation will proceed. Starting the on-site evaluation with an entrance interview is a means of modeling ACCSC's core value of open communication; affords the opportunity to introduce school and

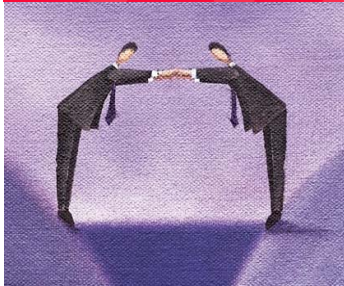
team members and begin developing an understanding of each member's role and responsibility during the on-site evaluation; and establishes a clear understanding of the expected process and procedure for conducting the review. It also affords an opportunity to address any questions the school may have and agree on a protocol for addressing issues that arise during the on-site evaluation.

The entrance interview is generally conducted by the team leader with the school director and/or key management team members. This meeting should include a brief review of the purpose of the on-site evaluation, as well as introductions of each team member and a brief description of each individual's role and responsibility. The team leader should also ask for an introduction of each of the key managers at the school. The team leader should then provide a brief overview of the expected activities of the review, including an approximate schedule for meals and team arrivals/departures.

The team leader will also establish the school's preferred protocol for communication of team requests and findings. One of the most important aspects of the entrance interview is also to assure the school representatives that any potential findings will be brought to the attention of the school director either during the course of day but always in a briefing before the team leaves on the first day of the on-site evaluation. This is critical to maintaining a collegial relationship during the on-site evaluation, and affords the school to present additional documentation for consideration.

Starting each on-site evaluation with an effective entrance interview will provide the basis for a meaningful experience that provides opportunities for growth and understanding, for the school and the team. Thank you team members – for your continued hard work on behalf of ACCSC.

A FOND FAREWELL TO TIM WILLIAMS



On behalf of the entire ACCSC community including the Commissioners, volunteers, and staff, we would like to wish Tim Williams and his wife Mary (a devoted Education Specialist) the best as they move on to new adventures. As many of you know Tim Williams retired from ACCSC in December 2009. We thank Tim for his effortless contributions to ACCSC and its mission.

A Breakdown of ACCSC's Newest Standard (continued from page 1)...



•The inclusion of *program design and evaluation standards* as a complement to the student assessment provisions:

Assessment also works best when programs have clear learning objectives and an explicitly stated purpose. The evaluation of student performance in relation to program learning objectives starts with sound and effective program design. Accordingly, the new standards require that schools have an established process for the design and development of appropriate education and training programs. Documentation of the process may include the school's work with its Program Advisory Committees, as well as other validation of the program.

Please note that the Commission has revised the following standards and/or practices:

- ✦ **Section VII (P), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation: permits for programmatic actions in addition to institutional actions**
- ✦ **Section VII (B)(2)(a), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation: Heightened Monitoring to review Student Outcomes Reporting prior to other Commission action.**
- ✦ **Section VII (B)(1)(b)(iv), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation: Commission consideration of aggregated institutional graduation and employment rates.**

For questions regarding these new standards, or others, please contact any of the Accreditation Department staff at ACCSC.

Save the date!

ACCSC is pleased to announce that the 2010 Professional Development Conference will be held September 29th – October 1st at the Ritz Carlton in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

More details regarding the schedule and speakers will be posted to www.accsc.org in the coming months.



Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges