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the Volunteer Source

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Institutional Assessment, Improvement, and Planning

Earlier this year, the Commission reviewed the Institutional Assessment and Improvement Plan (“IAIP”) standard as a means to assess the validity of the standard and how well the standard achieves the Commission’s intended outcome. Overall, the Commission determined that the concepts set forth in the current standard are valid, but also determined that the language of the standard could be more clearly stated with regard to the Commission’s intent.

To assess the membership’s perception and understanding of the IAIP standard, Commission staff facilitated a Focus Group of accredited members in December 2009 to review the current IAIP requirements and the following month conducted a membership survey with a random sample

of institutions that received IAIP compliance citations. In both instances the Commission staff found that while the schools believe that the assessment and planning concepts of this standard are sound and appropriate, challenges relate to interpretations and a consistent understanding and application of the Commission’s expectations. The survey results from the Commission’s systematic program of review conducted in 2009 by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (“NCHEMS”) also revealed that, overall, the membership agrees that the IAIP standard allows ACCSC to evaluate the quality of education and training provided by an institution and that the standard is relevant to the educational or training needs of students.

Although the Commission provides technical

assistance and interpretive guidance to the membership in this area through enhanced curricula at the Accreditation Workshops, a monograph entitled *Institutional Assessment and Improvement Planning and Implementation*, and a webinar entitled *Developing and Implementing Institutional Improvement Plans*, the Commission understands through the membership’s feedback that this standard warrants clarification.



Essentially, the Commission believes that it is the actions and activities related to assessment, improvement, and planning that are paramount and not the format in which the school chooses to engage in these actions and activities or how the school chooses to present this information for review.

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GROWING RESOURCES

Beginning in July 2010, ACCSC will be working directly with **Comcourse Learning Solutions** to provide expanded online training to the ACCSC community of schools and volunteers. [Click here](#) to view the Press Release. This dynamic training portal, which will be launched at <http://www.accsconline.org>, will provide *advanced training for volunteer on-site evaluators* as well as a diverse array of online training modules related to the Commission’s standards and procedures for the entire ACCSC community. For more information on this exciting and upcoming resource, please contact Christopher Lambert, Director of External Affairs at clambert@accsc.org.



The Truth In Lending Act

Recent Changes to TILA Concerning Private Education Loans

For ACCSC on-site evaluators it is important that we all be aware of these changes in order to work with the schools during the on-site evaluations.

During the last quarter ACCSC staff participated in a webinar regarding changes to the Truth In Lending Act, also known as TILA. As many of ACCSC's volunteers know TILA requires creditors to accurately and meaningfully disclose the costs of credit to consumer-borrowers. The Federal Reserve Board of Governors (FRB) is charged with implementing and enforcing TILA's requirements and has done so through Regulation Z.

On August 14, 2009, the FRB amended Regulation Z to implement changes to TILA required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA). The compliance deadline for most of those changes was February 14, 2010. TILA applies to outside

private lenders and schools extending their own private loans or billing plans. TILA applies to credit sales (e.g. retail installment contracts) as well as straight loans (e.g. promissory notes).

The FRB's recent changes to Regulation Z implement four main changes:

- clarify the disclosure and timing requirements for private educational loans;
- limit certain practices by creditors, including "co-branding" by outside lenders with educational institutions;
- require a "self-certification" form signed by the consumer before consummating the loan which reiterates the availability of free or lower-costing federal loans; and
- require creditors with preferred lending arrangements with

educational institutions to provide the basic loan terms for each type of loan offered on an annual basis.

In summation, it is clear that the new regulations provide clarity and protection to the consumer. For ACCSC on-site evaluators it is important that we all be aware of these changes in order to work with the schools during the on-site evaluations. The school's financial aid personnel should continue to monitor compliance with these regulations most importantly. For specifics about these recent changes please [Click Here](#).

For any other questions please contact Kristopher Pritchard, Accreditation Coordinator, ACCSC at kpritchard@accsc.org.

MEET OUR NEWEST ACCREDITATION STAFF MEMBER



ACCSC is pleased to announce that Jason Sandlin joined the Accreditation Department as the Accreditation Operations Assistant. Jason commenced his duties on May 25, 2010 and will be working to support the department and the volunteers through the on-site evaluation process. Jason will also be supporting pre-Commission meeting activities.

Jason reports to Bettina Falwell and is based at the Commission's Arlington office. Please join us in welcoming Jason!

Institutional Assessment, Improvement, and Planning (Continued from page 1)...



Accordingly, the Commission adopted revisions to *Section I (B), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*, which are intended to place greater focus on a school's ability to demonstrate engagement in assessment, improvement, and planning activities in a manner that best suits the school, its operations, and its goals. In light of the modifications to the Institutional Assessment Improvement and Planning section of the *Standards of Accreditation* described above, the Commission also determined that it is prudent to align the Commission's faculty development requirements in *Section III (A)(2), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation* with the new language as a means to ensure consistency. The Commission's revisions to *Section I and Section III of the Standards of Accreditation* can be found in the [March 30, 2010 Call for Comment](#).

These changes as outlined above are also intended to assist the Commission and On-Site Evaluation Teams to provide more consistent feedback to school's regarding their assessment and improvement activities and the corresponding plans. For further information regarding these changes, please contact Thomas Cornacchia, Director of Accreditation, ACCSC at tcornacchia@accsc.org.

Save the date!

ACCSC's 2010 Professional Development Conference will be held September 29th – October 1st at the Ritz Carlton in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Registration opens later this month at www.accsc.org.

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

ACCSC Extends Farewell & Congratulations to Jessica Tanaka

On behalf of the Commission, team member volunteers, and the entire staff, we would like to extend our well wishes to Jessica Tanaka as she leaves ACCSC. In addition, we congratulate Jessica and her husband as they prepare for their first child. Jessica has served the Commission for nearly 10 years and is to be commended for her outstanding contributions to the Accreditation department and the organization. We thank Jessica for her efforts and wish her well in this new but very important role.