

Discussion of a Code of Conduct for the Committee on Accreditation June 2011

Overview of this Report

This agenda item continues the conversation begun at the May 2011 COA meeting about the development of a Code of Conduct for the Committee on Accreditation to be included in the Committee's Procedures Manual.

Staff Recommendation

This item is presented for further consideration of the concepts in the proposed Code of Conduct for the Committee on Accreditation. Although this item was noticed as an action item, staff recommends that this be an information item, with possible action in August 2011 after staff counsel is able to review the final proposed wording from the COA.

Background

In January 2011, the COA discussed the possibility of adopting a Code of Conduct for Committee members (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-agendas/2011-01/2011-01-item-16.pdf>). An agenda item was prepared and discussed by the COA at its May 2011 meeting. That agenda item presented some initial language for a Code of Conduct that would be included in the COA's Procedures Manual and provided to all members.

The Commission staff has included the ideas and concepts discussed at the May 2011 meeting in the proposed draft language presented below. In addition, the COA requested that further discussion include consideration of the statutory language related to attendance of COA members at meetings. Section 404 of the COA Procedures language includes the following:

404 ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES; DECLARATION OF VACANCY

It is expected that Committee members will make every effort to attend all regular and special meetings.

A committee member's position shall be declared vacant by the Commission upon absence without sufficient cause from three consecutive Committee meetings or four Committee meetings in one calendar year. Sufficient cause is to be interpreted as an illness or injury to a Committee member or a member of his or her immediate family. An act of God (natural, state, or national disasters), which prevents a Committee member from attending a scheduled meeting may also be considered sufficient cause. Failure to attend due to a conflict with other scheduled meetings, or for social or personal reasons, will not be considered sufficient cause.

In the case of a two day meeting, attendance at the meeting for one of the two days will be considered "in attendance" at the meeting for the purpose of

determining whether an individual has missed three consecutive Committee meetings.

Upon the occasion of a Committee member accruing three consecutive absences or four absences in one calendar year without sufficient cause, the co-chairs of the Committee shall notify the Chair of the Commission and the Executive Director of the Commission that a vacancy has been established by virtue of three consecutive absences or four absences in one calendar year. The Chair of the Commission and the Executive Director shall then formally inform the Committee member that he or she can no longer serve on the Committee.

Language has been added in this draft Code of Conduct to reference the particular attendance section of the Procedures Manual. In addition, language has been added to reflect issues raised by the COA at its May 2011 meeting. For ease of reference, this new language is included as tracked changes. Further consideration and refinement of the proposed language, and any additional concepts would be welcome at this meeting.

Draft Code of Conduct:

1. Members of the Committee on Accreditation acknowledge that they serve on the Committee as professional, experienced educators, and do not at any time act as a representative of their employer, past or present.
2. Members of the Committee on Accreditation will make all reasonable attempts to attend all COA meetings, consistent with Section 404 of the Procedures Manual.
3. A member of the Committee on Accreditation may recuse oneself at anytime without explanation.
4. Members of the Committee on Accreditation will recuse themselves from any vote on matters, such as accreditation decisions and program approvals, related to any educational institution or other entity before the COA business for which they are employed, have recently been employed, or have a conflict of interest, is a reasonable likelihood they may be employed in the near future, or have a conflict of interest of any kind.
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- ~~2.~~5. Members of the Committee on Accreditation agree to engage in respectful, professional dialogue at all times during COA deliberations and meetings.
- ~~3.~~6. Members of the Committee on Accreditation may not share information they possess about any institution that is not contained in the accreditation team report during COA deliberations regarding that institution. If the information they possess is likely to impact their decision about the institution, the COA member will recuse him or herself.

- 4.7. _____ On the rare occasion that a member believe he or she has information that the COA must have regarding any institution or program, he or she must recuse him/herself from the vote on that institution and speak to the COA as a member of the public. Members of the COA agree to use this option only when absolutely necessary and may not use this option to promote their institution, employer, or own interests.
- 5.8. _____ Members of the Committee on Accreditation agree to discuss concerns related to Committee operations or procedural matters in open public meetings.
- 6.9. _____ Members of the Committee on Accreditation agree to discuss concerns about other members of the Committee on Accreditation first with the Co-Chairs of the Committee. The Co-Chairs will attempt to resolve the matter with the individual COA member in a respectful, confidential manner. If the situation continues and is affecting the work of the Committee, one or both of the COA Co-Chairs may request, in writing, to the Chair of the Commission and to the Executive Director, that the member of the COA be removed. The Chair of the Commission and the Executive Director would then follow the Commission's adopted policies and procedures as it relates to the removal of a Committee member.
10. Members of the Committee on Accreditation agree to discuss concerns about staff with the Co-Chairs and the Administrator of Accreditation. The Co-Chairs and the Administrator of Accreditation will then discuss the specific steps that need to be taken to resolve the matter. The Administrator of Accreditation will act to resolve these concerns in a timely manner in accordance with the Commission's personnel policies and those of the State of California. If the concerns of the COA member(s) are with the Administrator of Accreditation, the Co-Chairs will discuss the matter with the Administrator of Accreditation who will act to resolve these concerns in accordance with the Commission's personnel policies and those of the State of California. If the situation does not improve, the Co-Chairs will take the matter to the Director of the Professional Services Division. If the issue relates to the Director of the Professional Services Division, the Co-Chairs will seek to resolve it directly with the Director of the Professional Services Division first, and if the situation remains unresolved, with the Commission's Executive Director.

Next Steps

This item was listed as an action item on the agenda. However staff recommends that final proposed language be submitted to the Commission's staff counsel and be presented for consideration and action at the August 2011 meeting.