

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

Overview of this Report

This agenda item continues the conversation begun at the May 2011 COA meeting and continued at the June 2011 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 and language in the proposed Code of Conduct for the Committee on Accreditation and possible adoption. The comments of COA at its June 2011 meeting were incorporated into this version and the Committee may take action to include the language in its Procedures Manual, should it determine it is ready to do so.

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 and June 2011 meetings in the proposed draft language presented below. The COA had requested that further discussion include consideration of the language related to attendance of COA members at meetings. The relevant language about Commission attendance was provided to the Committee at the June 2011 meeting and is included here for reference in Appendix A. Language was added in the proposed draft Code of Conduct to reference the particular attendance section of the Procedures Manual. 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 representatives of their employers, 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 shall 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 for which they are employed, have

recently been employed, or there may be a reasonable likelihood they may be employed in the near future, or have a conflict of interest of any kind.

5. Members of the Committee on Accreditation agree to engage in respectful, professional dialogue at all times during COA deliberations and meetings.
6. Members of the Committee on Accreditation shall not share information they possess about any institution other than that 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 shall recuse him or herself.
7. On the rare occasion that a member believes he or she has information that the COA must have regarding any institution or program not their own, he or she shall 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.
8. Members of the Committee on Accreditation are strongly encouraged not to speak as representatives of their institution; rather, he or she should encourage their institution to have another individual from the institution represent its interests before the COA should they determine they need to do so.
9. Members of the Committee on Accreditation shall discuss concerns related to Committee operations or procedural matters in open public meetings in accordance with the provisions of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.
10. 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 shall follow the Commission's adopted policies and procedures as it relates to the removal of a Committee member.
11. 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.
 - a. 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.

- b. 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

Should the COA adopt the proposed language, the Procedures Manual will be updated to include the Code of Conduct. A revised version of the Procedures Manual will be available on the Commission's website.

Appendix A

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.