

Upcoming Topics for Accreditation Study Work Group Discussion

Professional Services Division October 12

Background

The Committee on Accreditation's next scheduled meeting is January 2005. The Accreditation Study Work Group is scheduled to meet two more times prior to the Committee's next meeting. This agenda item is intended to provide an opportunity for members of the Committee on Accreditation to discuss some of the issues that have been identified for discussion by the workgroup in November and January. These issues have not yet been taken up for discussion by the workgroup, nor has staff had an opportunity to analyze the numerous issues related to the various upcoming topics, but preliminary direction, guidance, and comment from the members of the COA would prove useful to the four COA members serving on the workgroup and the CTC staff.

The list of known topics to be addressed in the upcoming meetings is followed by a brief descriptive summary and then some general questions – questions that are not meant to be exhaustive. It is not anticipated that the Committee would reach consensus on any of these topics, but rather, share ideas about what the core issues related to each of these topics ought to be, what particular angles need to be examined in greater depth, what issues or concerns members of COA currently have related to these topics, and, perhaps, what resources or materials might be helpful as the review moves forward in examining these areas.

a. Issues Related to Standards

The Accreditation Framework includes Section 3 which addresses issues related to the Accreditation Standards. Category I addresses the Commission's Common Standards and Category II addresses Program Standards. The AIR report contained several recommendations related to this section of the *Framework*. Some of the questions that need further discussion include:

1. Should the recommendations contained in the AIR report be implemented?
2. Should all standards continue to be considered equal in importance? Or are some standards more important and, if so, what role should that play in a revised accreditation system?

b. National Program Accreditation

Most of the specialized areas in educator preparation have national professional associations that are involved in program accreditation. Section 3, Category II of the Commission's Framework outlines five different options for program

standards including Option 2 which addresses national or professional program standards.

1. Should the Commission reconsider its current policies on national program accreditation?
2. What role should an institution/district's national accreditation status of a program play in the Commission's accreditation process?
3. If the answer to #1 is yes, what are the options available for a new policy? What would be required in order to implement that policy (e.g. comparability of standards, etc.)

c. Non MS/SS Credential Areas (Administration, Pupil Personnel Services, Education Specialist, etc.)

Much of the discussion in the current accreditation review has been centered on the multiple and single subject credential areas. However, there are numerous other program areas offered by schools of education and districts that prepare educators and other school district personnel. Each of these credential areas may have unique issues that require attention during this review.

1. What are the unique and specific accreditation issues related to each of the various credential areas (non M.S., and S.S)?
2. How can the Commission best address these unique accreditation issues?

d. Accreditation Decision Options

The Education Code requires that the Committee on Accreditation make one of three accreditation decision: Accreditation, Accreditation with Stipulations, and Denial of Accreditation. Types of stipulations are further delineated as technical, substantive, and probationary. The current review will address whether there is a need to modify these accreditation decision options.

1. Does the current menu of accreditation decisions need to be modified in any way? If so, how?
2. Does the current menu of accreditation decisions limit appropriate monitoring of program quality?
3. Would a different menu of accreditation decisions help foster program improvement and public accountability?

e. Interim Accreditation Activities

The question of whether the current accreditation cycle of 5-7 year is sufficient to: 1) foster program improvement, and 2) provide on-going monitoring of program quality is a critical topic for discussion during this review.

1. Is the Commission's current cycle sufficient to foster program improvement and provide on-going monitoring of program quality?
2. If not, should the Commission adopt an interim accreditation activity?
3. If so, what should that interim accreditation activity look like?

4. What would be the appropriate period of time between accreditation activities?
5. How could this interim accreditation activity help shape and focus accreditation visits so that it is less cumbersome to the institution and to the Commission?

f. Sanctions

Currently, an institution with an accreditation finding of “accreditation with stipulations” must address those stipulations within one year. If an institution does not address those stipulations satisfactorily, it could risk its accreditation status. However, concern has been raised about the lack of flexibility of the COA, and by extension, the Commission, to ensure appropriate follow up of institutions that have been deemed through their accreditation visit to require some corrective action be taken. Additionally, if an institution receives full accreditation, no follow up is required even if concerns were raised in the accreditation report.

1. Do the current sanctions available to COA provide sufficient assurance that institutions with stipulations have adequately addressed the areas of concerns?
2. If not, where are the areas of weaknesses?
3. If not, how might they be modified?
4. Should the COA be provided with flexibility to request additional information or follow up from institutions deemed fully accredited?

Other Topics Suggested by the COA

As previously discussed, the above list is by no means exhaustive. COA members should raise issues they view as requiring further study and discussion during this review.

1. What other topics should be addressed that have not yet been addressed during the review?