
4B

Information/Action

Professional Services Committee

Proposed Options for Committee on Accreditation Member Selection Process

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides options related to filling the current vacancy on the Committee on Accreditation (COA) and a process for selecting future members of the COA.

Recommended Action: That the Commission take action to fill the current vacancy on the COA.

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Strategic Plan Goal: 1

Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation of professional educators.
- ◆ Assess and monitor the efficacy of the Accreditation System, Examination System, and State and Federal Funded Programs.

Proposed Options for Committee on Accreditation Member Selection Process

Introduction

At the April 2006 Commission meeting the Commission extended the terms of the eleven members of the Committee on Accreditation (COA) until June 30, 2007. This extension of terms will allow the COA to continue to operate during the 2006-2007 year, during which six accreditation site visits are scheduled. In addition, the Commission asked staff to return with possible options to fill the current vacancy on the COA and possible options to transition to a staggered selection process for COA members that could be implemented prior to June 2007 which is contained in Part A of this agenda item. The Commission also requested additional information on how to transition to a revised selection process for membership on the COA. The recommendations from the Accreditation Study Work Group describing the transition to a revised selection process are included in Part B.

Background

Education Code Section 44373 (a) sets forth the process by which the Commission selects members of the COA. It requires that the 12 members be selected for their distinguished records of accomplishments in education. Six must be from postsecondary education and six must be certificated professionals in public schools, school districts, or county offices of education in California. Appointment of members shall be from nominees submitted by a distinguished panel named by consensus of the Commission and the Committee on Accreditation. For each COA position to be filled, the nominating panel would submit two qualified nominees from which the Commission chooses one.

The statute requires a two-phase process: 1) agreement by the Commission and the COA on the composition of a Nominating Panel; and 2) selection of COA members. The process for selection of new members of the COA is defined in the *Accreditation Framework*. In the current system for two out of every three years, half of the COA has been newly appointed, making the operation of COA difficult as new members learn the policies, processes, and procedures.

The Committee on Accreditation and the Work Study Group concluded that the current system for selecting Committee members is overly cumbersome, time-consuming, and costly. As a result, they have proposed revising the manner in which the Committee members are selected and their terms. This recommendation is discussed later in this item in Part B.

Part A: Current Vacancy

Currently there is one vacancy on the COA, a K-12 member. All other members of the COA have confirmed their availability to serve through June 2007. At the April 2006 Commission meeting, the Commission expressed a desire to fill the vacancy on the COA. In addition, the Commission was in favor of the recommendation that members of the Accreditation Study Work Group who meet the K-12 requirement would be the best candidates for membership on the COA due to the fact that Work Group members have studied the accreditation system in depth over the past two years. In order to provide a full review of the options, however, staff has identified four options below as possible ways to address the current vacancy.

1. Select an additional member for the COA using the currently adopted process, as defined in the *Accreditation Framework*.
2. Waive the currently adopted selection process, as defined in the *Accreditation Framework* and adopt an Interim Selection Process. Use the Interim Selection Process described in Part B (below) to select a new member for the COA.
3. Waive the currently adopted selection process, as defined in the *Accreditation Framework* and ask staff to survey the members of the Accreditation Study Work Group that meet the K-12 requirement for interest in the vacancy on the COA. Staff would then bring this information, and any other information requested by the Commission to the July/August 2006 meeting and the Commission could appoint a new member of the COA at the July/August Commission meeting.
4. Wait until a new *Accreditation Framework* is adopted to implement a revised selection process for new members for the COA thereby leaving a vacancy on the COA for the 2006-2007 year.

Because Option 1 requires using the currently adopted process, it has significantly higher costs associated with it than the other options. In addition, the timeline to implement Option 1 will require at a minimum six to eight months. Option 2 with the concurrent adoption of an Interim Selection Process, as described below, would allow an additional member of the COA to be selected within three to four months, begin the transition to a revised selection process, and involve minor costs. Option 3 would have no costs associated with it and fill the vacancy in August 2006. Option 4 would result in the position remaining vacant during the 2006-2007 year.

Part B: Transition to a Revised Selection Process for COA Members

To address concerns that the COA selection process, as it has been implemented in the past is cumbersome, time consuming, and costly, the Accreditation Study Work Group, with the support and assistance of the COA, developed a proposed new COA selection process.

The COA and the Work Group believe that the selection process can be adjusted and streamlined without affecting the quality of individuals who are selected to serve on the Committee and have proposed a transition plan to implement the revised process.

The COA and the Work Group have offered the following suggestions to improve the process:

1. Streamline the process to determine who shall serve as the nominating panel by establishing in the *Framework* that the Commission and the COA shall each nominate two individuals to serve on the nominating committee. Each body shall nominate one college or university member, and one elementary or secondary school member.
2. Establish in the *Framework* that the terms of the Nominating Panel will be four years long and that members of the panel may serve more than one term. This will prevent the need for reestablishing the nominating panel each time there is a need for new COA members.
3. Change the length of the terms for COA members from 3-year terms to 4-year terms. This, together with staggering the terms, will ensure that the COA membership will be sufficiently balanced between new members and experienced members and necessitate selection of three members annually.
4. Stagger the terms of COA members in the transition from the *Accreditation Framework* (1995) to the revised *Framework* (2006) such that there will be three new members appointed for four year terms in the first year. Nine of the current members would continue to serve, with three members serving for one additional year, three for two additional years, and three for three additional years. This transition will ensure that, notwithstanding vacancies, each subsequent year, three new members will be appointed to the COA by the Commission, yet the majority of members would be experienced, maintaining continuity.

Utilizing the proposed selection process and beginning implementation with the 07-08 year would allow the first selection process to be completed in Spring 2007 with action by the Commission prior to the end of June 2007. In addition to selecting three new members of the COA, the Commission would need to extend terms of nine of the current members of the COA: three members' terms for one additional year, three members' terms for two additional years, and three members' terms for three additional years—See Table 1 below. Staff estimates that the revised selection process would involve approximately \$3,000 in expenses in travel for the Nominating Panel and the candidates that are interviewed by the Commission.

Table 1: COA Membership Transition Plan—amended for 06-07 implementation date

06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11
11 current members	9 continuing members	6 continuing members	3 continuing members	
1 new member		3 members with one year of experience	6 members with one to two years of experience	9 members with 1, 2 or 3 years of experience
	3 newly appointed members	3 newly appointed members	3 newly appointed members	3 newly appointed members

Recommendations

1. To fill the current vacancy on the COA, staff recommends that the Commission act to waive the current *Accreditation Framework*, Section 2 C 1 and 4, related to the composition of the Nominating Panel and terms of the members of the COA (Appendix A contains Section 2 of the current *Accreditation Framework*) and adopt either Option 2 or 3 to select a new member of the COA.
2. In addition, staff recommends that the Commission act to adopt the COA and Work Group's proposal for selection of members of the COA as described in Part B, above, and direct staff to begin implementation of the process so that the Commission will be able to select three new members of the COA by June 2007.

3.

Appendix A

Section 2 of the Current *Accreditation Framework*

Section 2

Functions and Appointment of the Committee on Accreditation

The functions, membership and appointment of the Committee on Accreditation are set forth in Education Code Section 44373 and this section.

A. Functions of the Committee on Accreditation

- 1. Comparability of Standards.** In accordance with Section 3 of this *Framework*, the Committee determines whether standards submitted by institutions under Option 2 (National or Professional Program Standards) or Option 5 (Alternative Program Standards), taken as a whole, provide a level of program quality comparable to standards adopted by the Commission under Option 1 (California Program Standards). If the Committee determines that the proposed standards are collectively comparable in breadth and depth, when taken as a whole, to the Commission-adopted standards, the Committee on Accreditation may approve the proposed standards as Program Standards in California.
- 2. Initial Accreditation of Programs.** The Committee reviews proposals for the initial accreditation of programs submitted by institutions that have been determined eligible by the Commission. New programs of educator preparation may be submitted under Options One, Two, Four or Five in Section 3. If the Committee determines that a program meets all applicable standards, the Committee grants initial accreditation to the program.
- 3. Continuing Accreditation Decisions.** After reviewing the recommendations of accreditation teams and the responses of institutions, the Committee makes decisions about the continuing accreditation of educator preparation institutions and programs, consistent with Section 6 of this *Framework*. Pertaining to each institution, the Committee makes one of three decisions: Accreditation, Accreditation with Stipulations, or Denial of Accreditation.
- 4. Accreditation Procedures.** Consistent with the terms of Section 6, the Committee recommends appropriate guidelines for self-study reports and other accreditation materials and exhibits to be prepared by institutions. The Committee also adopts guidelines for accreditation team reports, which emphasize the use of narrative, qualitative explanations of team recommendations. The Committee may provide additional guidance to institutions, teams and the Executive Director regarding accreditation visit procedures. The procedural guidelines of the Committee are published by the Commission as an *Accreditation Handbook*.

5. **Monitor the Accreditation System.** The Committee monitors the performance of accreditation teams and oversees other activities associated with the accreditation system.
6. **Annual Reports, Recommendations and Responses.** The Committee presents *Annual Accreditation Reports* to the Commission. *Annual Reports* include standard information about the dimensions and results of the accreditation process. The Committee also advises the Commission about policy changes to improve the quality and integrity of the accreditation process.
7. **Meet in Public Sessions.** The Committee conducts its business and makes its decisions in meetings that are open to the public, except as provided by statute.
8. **Jointly Sponsor an External Evaluation of Accreditation Policies and Practices.** The Committee shares responsibility with the Commission for the design and implementation of a comprehensive evaluation of accreditation policies and the selection of an external evaluator to conduct the evaluation, pursuant to Section 8 of the *Framework*.

B. Membership of the Committee on Accreditation

1. **Membership Composition.** The Committee consists of twelve members. Six members are from postsecondary education institutions, and six are certificated professionals in public schools, school districts, or county offices of education in California. Selection of members is based on the breadth of their experience, the diversity of their perspectives, and "their distinguished records of accomplishment in education" (Education Code Section 44373-a). All members serve as members-at-large. No member serves on the Committee as a representative of any organization, institution, or constituency. To the maximum extent possible, Committee membership is balanced according to ethnicity, gender, and geographic regions. The Committee includes members from elementary and secondary schools, and from public and private postsecondary institutions. The elementary and secondary school members include at least one certificated administrator, one teacher, and one role specialist. The postsecondary members include at least one administrator and one faculty member, both of whom must be involved in professional teacher education programs.
2. **Membership Criteria.** The criteria for membership on the Committee are: evidence of achievement in the education profession; recognized professional or scholarly contributions in the field of education; recognition of excellence by peers; experience with and sensitivity to issues of human diversity; distinguished service in the field of educator preparation; knowledge of issues related to the preparation and licensing of

education professionals; length of professional service; and possession of appropriate educational degrees and professional credentials.

C. Appointment of the Committee on Accreditation

- 1. Nominating Panel.** A Nominating Panel of six distinguished members of the education profession in California identifies and nominates individuals to serve on the Committee on Accreditation. The Nominating Panel is comprised of three college and university members and three elementary and secondary school members. The Commission and the Accreditation Advisory Council must reach consensus on the members of the initial Nominating Panel. Subsequently, the Commission and the Committee on Accreditation will reach consensus on new members of the Nominating Panel. The terms of Nominating Panel members are four years long. Members of the Panel may not serve more than one term.
- 2. Nomination of Committee Members.** To select members for the Committee on Accreditation, the Nominating Panel solicits nominations from professional organizations, agencies, institutions, and individuals in education. Each nomination must be submitted with the consent of the individual and the nominee's professional resume. Self-nominations are not accepted.
- 3. Selection of Initial Committee Members.** Based on the membership criteria and the principles of balanced composition set forth in this section, the Nominating Panel recommends for initial appointment twenty-four highly qualified nominees who are drawn equally from colleges and universities (twelve nominees) and elementary and secondary schools (twelve nominees). The Commission appoints the twelve members and six alternate members of the Committee by selecting from the nominations submitted by the Panel.
- 4. Terms of Appointment.** The Commission appoints members of the Committee on Accreditation to three-year terms. However, the initial appointees include six members with two-year appointments and six with three-year appointments. A member may be re-nominated and reappointed to a second term of three years. A member may serve a maximum of two terms on the Committee.
- 5. Selection of Subsequent Committee Members.** Prior to the conclusion of the Committee members' terms, the Nominating Panel again submits nominations to the Commission, which must be drawn from individuals who have been nominated and reviewed. The Panel submits twice as many nominees as the number of pending vacancies on the Committee. The Commission fills each Committee seat and alternate position by selecting from the nominations.
- 6. Committee Vacancies.** When a seat on the Committee becomes vacant prior to the conclusion of the member's term, the Executive Director fills the seat for the remainder of the term by appointing a replacement from the list of alternate members.