

Discussion of Changes to the Accreditation Handbook November 2017

Overview of this Report

This report discusses anticipated changes that will be needed to the Accreditation Handbook in order to address concerns of the Office of Administrative Law as a result of proposed changes to regulations pertaining to accreditation and cost recovery fees.

Staff Recommendation

This item is for information only. Staff welcomes any direction that the COA would like to provide on the issues presented by staff.

Background

For a number of years now, the Commission has implemented a two part fee system for accreditation activities. The first are annual fees that all Commission approved program sponsors pay. That fee is determined by a formula that takes into account the number of programs that the institution offers so that institutions that offer a single program pay far less than a large institution that offers over 20 or 30 programs.

The second type of accreditation related fee is for extraordinary activities. This includes Initial Institutional Approval, Initial Program Review, late document submissions for Biennial Reports and Program Assessment, and a full program review during a site visit when a large number of standards were not able to be determined to be preliminarily aligned during Program Assessment. The language of the current regulations include reference to a number of processes that have been updated or replaced with the implementation of the new system. For instance, the late documents fee language is specifically tied to “Program Assessment” and “Biennial Reports”, neither of which exist in the current system. Program Assessment has been replaced by a new Program Review process and Biennial Reports no longer exist. Instead, the new system will include Annual Data Submission. As a result of changing the accreditation system, the language of the regulations related to extraordinary fees must also be updated to ensure alignment and so that the intent of charging for extraordinary activities, in particular for late submissions of Program Review and Annual Data Submission can be incorporated and updated and the references to Biennial Reports and Program Assessment be eliminated.

In December 2016, the Commission directed staff to move forward with the regulatory process. The Commission submitted and followed all required timelines however, withdrew the proposed regulations from the Office of Administrative Law after consultation with their office. The OAL has requested that several issues be addressed. These include issues related primarily to clarity and to necessity. In order to address the issues identified by the OAL, staff will need to propose revisions to the *Accreditation Handbook*. The current Accreditation Handbook may be accessed at the following link: [Accreditation Handbook](#).

The staff will discuss some of these examples of areas in need of revision with the COA. These proposed revisions will be presented for action at the February 2018 meeting of the COA and once these are approved, the regulatory process may be resumed.