Discussion of Potential Handbook Changes
May 2019

Overview
This agenda item begins the discussion of several changes that the COA may consider for updating the Accreditation Handbook.

Recommendation
That the COA provide direction to the staff about the types of changes needed for the Accreditation Handbook. No action is needed at this time and staff will return at a future meeting with language for inclusion in the Accreditation Handbook.

Background
The Accreditation Handbook was revised with the Strengthening and Streamlining Project. Since the Commission has been implementing the revised accreditation system for two years now, it is timely to review the contents of the Accreditation Handbook to determine where, if any, changes are needed to be made.

Among the areas that staff has identified for review are the following:

1) More emphasis in the Accreditation Handbook that it provides guidance to institutions, the COA, and the public and that the COA, based on its collective expertise and professional judgement, has the ability to make a decision based on all information in the site visit report, the presentation at the COA meeting, and all ameliorating or aggravating factors.
2) Revised language pertaining to closure of a program. For instance, clarification is needed that reference to closure of a program that does not meet half the standards is only an example and not the sole time that the COA may consider closure of a program.
3) Clarification of the review process for preconditions and the role that precondition violations play in accreditation decisions. In addition, clarification is needed about actions that may be taken, and the timeline for those actions, in those situations for when an institution is out of compliance with a precondition.
4) Greater specification about late documents, the issues around due dates, extensions, and other related matters as they concern, but are not limited to, preconditions, program review documentation, Common Standards submissions, and annual data submissions.
5) Any language that is not consistent with the manner in which the accreditation system has evolved as it has been implemented since the most recent revision. Some of the processes were new when the Handbook was revised and as staff, the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR), and the COA has worked to implement the new system,

some processes in the way that the system has been implemented may have been adjusted as more was learned about what works most efficiently and effectively.

In addition, the Commission staff will discuss with the COA the related issues of promulgating regulations where needed to ensure the enforcement capabilities of the COA and the Commission for matters included in the Accreditation Handbook.