

## **Introducing the New Commission on Accreditation: Changes and Challenges**

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### **The Snowbird Summit**

#### Genesis: The 2005 Accreditation Summit

- January 1, 1991 – accreditation major restructuring and revision
- From 7-21 member CoA
- Seats apportioned across 5 domains
- BEA to review structure & composition every 3 years

#### CoA Internal Challenges 2000-2005

- Exceedingly heavy workload
- 5 year max for intern/post-docs
- Few intern/post-doc members
- Applying the more complex accreditation G&P consistently

#### CoA External Challenges & Pressures: 2000-2005

- Developing practice areas press for recognition
- The “emerging substantive areas” conundrum
- Accrediting post-doc residencies
- Maintaining cultural/individual diversity within the CoA

#### Initial Attempts to Review CoA Composition

- 2000-2004: 2 modest attempts fail
- Little progress or change for almost a decade
- 2004: BEA appoints an ad hoc independent advisory council
- 7 “wise & impartial” members with no axes to grind

#### The BEA Advisory Council on Accreditation

- Meets intensively and creatively
- Initial proposal to drop “domains” elicits no support from the field
- Back to the drawing board

#### Advisory Council’s Final Recommendations

- Change name from Committee to Commission
- 48 members of CoA for broader representation
- Greater autonomy moving away organizationally from APA
- CoA initiate meetings with affected groups and work out details

### A Respectful Revolt

- COGDOP, CUDCP, NCSPP, CCPTP, CDSPP, APPIC – Rise up!!
- Alternative meeting right after advisory council makes report
- CoA Representative invited
- “crux” of the program laid bare
- Inclusion usually works better than exclusion over long-term

### An Alternative Proposal

- Hold an “open” summit to which any interested group or organization can send a representative
- Invite CoA and BEA to sponsor and support the summit
- Listen carefully to all participants
- Emphasize bottom-up collaboration rather than top-down dictates

### The Birth of a Summit

- CoA and BEA sign on quickly
- Summit “conveners” and co-chairs recognized
- Speedy planning and site determination
- Open invitations extended widely

### The Snowbird, Utah Accreditation Summit

- Held June 23-26, 2005
- Primary Goal: address issues and concerns about CoA structure and composition
- Related Goals: facilitate CoA’s capacity to deal with workload
- Allow broad and equitable representation across the full education and training spectrum
- Maintain a unified accreditation system protecting integrity & interests of all constituents
- Ensure a flexible approach for continuing development and evolution of the field

### The Summit Process and “Spirit”

- 40 groups participated
- 50 participants
- An initial surprise and a collaborative spirit
- “check your egos and special interests at the door”
- Vigorous interaction between diverse participants
- Two days of discussion, break-out groups, and plenary session
- Two more days of debate and drafting by the 18 conveners

### Summit Recommendations

- A “Commission on Accreditation”
- Annual accreditation open assembly for training and for input from every field
- An expanded panel review process, details to be determined by the CoA
- 32 member CoA for greater representation and flexibility
- 10 year review cycles regarding CoA structure and composition

### Continuing Challenges (A personal perspective)

- Managing an expanded CoA
- Developing and integrating review panels
- Responding to demands for greater representation
- Maintaining “delicate balance” of inter-organizational commission housed in large membership organization
- Continuing the move from paper to electronic decision-making
- Maintaining enthusiasm and commitment from hard-working CoA members and, especially, a dedicated and resourceful staff
- Finally, anticipating the future revision of the G&P and the next review of the CoA’s structure and composition

### **The Transition to a Commission**

#### First Wave of Implementation – 2007

- Transition to commission working group appointed by Committee on Accreditation
- Jeff Baker and Martin Heesacker, Co-Chairs
- Nancy Elman, Bob Knight, and Norma Simon, CoA members

#### Goals for the Year

- Implement recommendations from the Snowbird Summit
- Establish and execute process for nomination of new members representing identified constituencies
- Accomplishing smooth transition to the Commission that does not interrupt the accreditation functioning

#### Transition to Commission

- Commission on Accreditation began January 1, 2008
- Expanded from 21 to 32 members
- Hosted 1<sup>st</sup> assembly – Tampa, FL
- Developed a structure for the first year of the Commission – including the election of a chair and 2 associate chairs
- Combined traditional January Policy Meeting with Training and Orientation meeting for 19 new members
- New and returning members participated in training exercise designed to ensure calibration for all CoA in applying the G&P
- Creation of decision making and operational processes to manage the Commission’s work
- Accommodate larger decision making group and expanded staff needs
- Manage accreditation of 898 programs
- Ensure effective CoA communication processes (intro to Teamsite)

### Accredited Programs as of 5/5/2008

- Doctoral: 377
- Internship: 472
- Postdoctoral: 49
- Total: 898

### Creation of 4 Policy Panels

- Panel 1: Practicum, Internship, and Postdoctoral Residency Issues
- Panel 2: CoA Policies and Procedures
- Panel 3: Competencies and their assessment
- Panel 4: G&P challenges

### Creation of 4 Working Groups

- Accreditation Assembly – implementing a Snowbird Goal
- Training issues – making sure that Communities of interest are well trained to enhance the self-study and site visitor process
- Research
- Complaints

### Next Steps

- Continue to evaluate effectiveness of transition process and 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Plan, implement and evaluate effectiveness of additional panels to ensure consistency for programs under review – 2 will operate in 2009; 1 of existing 5 and 1 new one, with addition of 5 more panel reviewers

### Challenges and Opportunities

- Distance, Education, Residency
- Expanded scope of accreditation – developed practice areas
- The competency movement: goals, objectives, competencies, and evidence based learning outcomes
- Autonomy of the CoA
- Length of Accreditation – 3-5-7 years or Accredited/Not Accredited
- Diversity, Broad and General, Sufficiency of Practicum, Diversity Education

### **Challenges and Changes in Accreditation**

#### US Quality Assurance

- The current conflict in higher education is based upon the friction between freedom and standards for quality;
- US system of higher education is driven by the educational governing boards of each state that determine what degrees can be conferred by an institution in that state
- Quality is in part reviewed by a system of accreditation

### Who Monitors the Accreditors?

- US Secretary of Education of the United States –
  - Authority to recognize accreditors is linked to the use of federal funds for education and training such as Title IV; Specialized accreditors have to justify the need for recognition in terms of linkage to federal funding or other federal authority
  - Standards for approval of accrediting bodies are part of the Higher Educational Authorization Act
  - This act is currently under review – this revised act has been under review since 2006 and has not yet received final approval

### NACIQI (National Advisory Commission on Quality and Integrity)

- An advisory commission of 15 individuals appointed by the Secretary of the Department
- Reviews the documentation on adherence to the standards in the Higher Education Act and makes recommendations to the Secretary about recognition

### CHEA (Council for Higher Education Accreditation)

- Non-profit group of higher education administrators representing institutions formed to approve the quality of accreditors
- Standards are more flexible and linked to the institutional and/or program's mission
- Has recognition committee that reviews accreditors composed of individuals from institutions, accrediting bodies, and the public, appointed by the CHEA board

### Spellings Commission

- Issues in current system of Higher Education –
  - Commission was chaired by Charles Miller, a private investor and former chair of the University of Texas System Board of Regents
  - Focus on what business and industry needs from high education

### Final Commission Report pushed for...

- Every student in the US should have the opportunity to pursue higher education
- Review of the entire student financial aid system – restructuring the system and improving the measurement of costs and institutional productivity
- Education must move from a system based upon the reputation of institutional quality to a performance based system
  - **Creation of a culture of accountability, transparency, and comparability**

### Higher Education Accountability Initiatives

- NASULGC and NAICU
  - Templates for reporting information on institutions (U-CAN from NASULGC)
  - Broad Assessment instruments

- The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) – evaluation of critical thinking, analytic reasoning and written communication
- National Forum on College Level Learning – measure of what educated college students “know and can do”
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) – student participation and engagement in programs

#### Commission on Accreditation of APA

- Review of assessment of competencies during periodic review:
  - Importance of program’s model, goals, objectives, and measurable competencies (Domain B)
  - Minimum level of achievement for each competency
  - Outcome data on competencies while in the program and after graduation (Domain F)
- Accountability information for all doctoral programs to provide the public with comparable information on:
  - Time to degree
  - Cost
  - Attrition
  - Acceptance in internships
  - Licensure

#### Higher Education Act Accreditation Provisions

- 602.16 Accreditation and preaccreditation standards
  - (a) the agency must demonstrate that it has standards for accreditation, and preaccreditation, if offered, that are sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the agency is a reliable authority regarding the quality of the education or training provided by the institutions or programs it accredits. The agency meets this requirement if – the agency’s accreditation standards effectively address the quality of the institution or program in the following areas:
    - “(A) success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution’s mission, which may include different standards for different institutions or programs, as established by the institution, including, as appropriate, consideration of state licensing examinations, and job placement rates.”
    - (B) Curricula
    - (C) Faculty
    - (D) Facilities, equipment, and supplies
    - (E) Fiscal and administrative capacity as appropriate to the specified scale of operations
    - (F) Student support services
    - (G) Recruiting and admissions practices, academic calendars, catalogs, publications, grading, and advertising
    - (H) Measures of program length and the objectives of the degrees or credentials offered

- (I) Record of student complaints received by, or available to, the agency
- (J) Record of compliance with the institution's program responsibilities under Title IV of the Act, based on the most recent student loan default rate data provided by the Secretary, the results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews and any other information that the Secretary may provide to the agency

#### Rules of Construction

- Nothing in 496 (a)(5) shall restrict the authority of ---
  - (1) an accrediting agency or association to set, with the involvement of its members, and to apply accreditation standards or institutions or programs that seek review by the agency or association
  - (2) an institution to develop and use institutional standards to show its success with respect to student achievement, which shall be considered as part of any accreditation review

#### Changes in Conference

- Although both the House and Senate versions of the bill (as well as other legislation prohibit the Secretary from putting forward regulations on accreditation, the conference committee has put forward the following in the draft conference bill:
  - The Secretary shall not promulgate any regulation with respect to subsections (a)(5)(A), (a)(5)(B), (a)(5)(G), (a)(5)(H)
    - These four sections refer to:
      - A: success with respect to student achievement
      - B: curricula
      - G: recruiting and admission practices, academic calendars, catalogs, publications, grading, and advertising
      - H: measures of program length and the objectives of the degrees or credentials offered
    - Sections NOT included – thus open to the Secretary's regulation:
      - C: **faculty**
      - D: facilities, equipment and supplies
      - E: fiscal and administrative capacity...
      - F: student support services
      - I: record of student complaints
      - J: record of compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV

#### Another Major Issue in Conference

- The Draft requires recognized accreditors to include (as part of the on-site evaluation) a review of the federally required information that the institution or program provides its current and prospective students. As written, this would apply to national, regional, and specialized accreditors, including CoA

- This would require a review of a huge amount of information (i.e., somewhere between 300-400 new items)
- For example, campus crime statistics, refund policies, or many other institutional but not programmatic issues

#### Request for Assistance

- Please contact your program directors, deans, Presidents. Please ask them to encourage their institutional president to contact Congress on the accreditation issue that concerns us all – the (a)(5) issue in the May 19 call to action from ACE
- Accreditors who have not already done so are asked to please contact Congress about the review of federally required information – the other issue mentioned in the ACE May 19 call to action

#### Other Issues that May Impact CoA as an Accrediting Body

- Changes in the composition of the group that advises the Secretary about who should be an accrediting body (NACIQI)
- Changes in the CHEA recognition criteria

#### Other Issues in Higher Education

- Changes in the student loan environment
- National, state and local funding for higher education
- International efforts, such as the Bologna accord, to systematize degrees and learning in other countries
- Increase in professional doctorates