



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

10 COMMERCIAL BOULEVARD
SUITE 204
NOVATO, CA 94949
TELEPHONE: (415) 506-0234
FAX: (415) 506-0238
E-MAIL: accjc@accjc.org
www.accjc.org

Chairperson
E. JAN KEHOE
CCLDIF

Vice Chairperson
LURELEAN B. GAINES
East Los Angeles College

President
BARBARA A. BENO

Vice President
GARMAN JACK POND

Associate Vice President
LILY OWYANG

Business Officer
DEANNE WILBURN

ITAS
TOM LANE

Administrative Assistant
CLARE GOLDBERG

Copy To:

January 28, 2008

- MT / Director of Institutional Advancement
- ALO
- Faculty Senate Pres.
- Staff Senate Pres.

RECEIVED
DATE/BY 2/12/08 *def*
Betsy Sabla

MEMO TO: Chancellors, Chief Executive Officers,
Accreditation Liaison Officers, Academic Senate
Presidents and Interested Others

FROM: Barbara A. Beno *Barbara A Beno*

SUBJECT: Commission Action on Policies

At its January, 2008 Meeting, the Commission considered for second reading and adopted the following revised policy: Policy on Review of Commission Actions.

The commission also adopted the following edited policies to meet the requirements of the USDOE in our 2007 Petition for Recognition.

1. Policy on Review of Accreditation Standards
2. Policy on the Rights and Responsibilities of ACCJC and Member Institutions in the Accrediting Process
3. Bylaws for the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges
4. Policy on Public Disclosure
5. Policy on Relations with Government Agencies
6. Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions
7. Policy on Complaints Against the Accrediting Commission

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

POLICY ON REVIEW OF COMMISSION ACTIONS

(Adopted January 1977, Revised January 1979, June 1998; Edited June 2002, August 2006, and January 2008)

Institutions that are denied candidacy or initial accreditation, or whose candidacy or accredited status is terminated by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges may request a review of the Commission's decisions. Other Commission actions are not subject to review. For purposes of compliance with §602.25(c) of the Higher Education Act, these actions are considered to be adverse actions. Such a review must be requested prior to filing of an appeal by the institution to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The following procedures will govern the conduct of the Commission's review:

1. If the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges decides to take any of the actions listed above, its President will notify the institution concerned of the decision by certified mail, return receipt requested, within approximately seven calendar days of the Commission's decision. Said notification shall contain a succinct statement of the reasons for the Commission's decision.
2. If the institution wishes a review by the Commission, it shall file with the President a request for such a review under the policies and procedures of the Commission. This request should be submitted by the chief executive officer of the institution and co-signed by the Chairperson of the governing board. Requests for review by an institution in a multi-college system shall be co-signed by the chief executive officer of the system. This request must be received by certified mail, return receipt requested, within twenty-eight calendar days of the date of the mailing of the Commission's notification of its decision to the institution. The fee for review shall accompany the request.
3. Within twenty-one calendar days after the date of its request for a review, the institution, through its chief administrative officer, must submit a written statement of the reasons why, in the institution's opinion, a review of the Commission's decision is warranted. As a general rule, this written statement should respond only to the reasons cited by the Commission in its decision and to the evidence that was before the Commission at the time of its decision. In so doing, the institution shall identify the basis for its request for review in one or more of the following areas: (1) there were errors or omissions in carrying out prescribed procedures on the part of the evaluation team and/or the Commission which materially affected the Commission's decision; (2) there was demonstrable bias or prejudice on the part of one or more members of the evaluation team or Commission which materially affected the Commission's decision; (3) the evidence before the Commission prior to and on the date when it made the decision which is being appealed was materially in error; or (4) the decision of the Commission was not supported by substantial evidence.

complaints about any aspect of the review process. The review committee is allowed to consider only evidence that was available to or known by the Commission at the time of its taking action. New evidence or information relating to actions or events subsequent to the date of the Commission action shall not be presented or considered by the review committee.

9. The committee will prepare a report that states the reasons for the Commission action, identifies each reason advanced by the institution in its request for review, and, for each reason, evaluates the evidence which the institution has presented in support of its request for review. In addition, the review committee may evaluate additional evidence that, in its opinion, is relevant to its recommendation to the Commission and was before the Commission at the time it rendered its decision. The report shall state only findings of fact, and not consider or cite any evidence relating to facts or events occurring after the date of the Commission's decision.
10. The Chairperson of the review committee will submit a copy of the committee's report which is referred to in paragraph 9 to the chief executive officer of the institution, the Chairperson of the institution's governing board, and the President of the Commission, normally within twenty-one calendar days of the end of the review committee's deliberations, via certified mail or other means that provide a receipt of delivery.
11. Within fourteen calendar days of the institution's receipt of the review committee's report, via certified mail or other means that provide a receipt of delivery, the chief executive officer may submit a written response to the President of the Commission, with a copy to the Chairperson of the review committee. Failure of the institution to submit a response shall constitute an acceptance by the institution of the review committee's report.
12. In a confidential letter to the Commission, the review committee shall recommend whether the decision of the Commission under review should be affirmed, reversed, or modified. The recommendation of the review committee to the Commission will not be disclosed to the institution being reviewed. The recommendation is not binding on the Commission.
13. In making its decision on the institution's status, the Commission will consider the evidence available to it and then reach a final decision to (a) reaffirm its original decision; (b) modify it; or (c) reverse it. As soon after the meeting as practicable, the President will notify the chief executive officer of the institution by certified mail or other means that provide a receipt of delivery, of the Commission's decision.
14. The decision of the Commission, referred to in paragraph 15, shall be final as far as the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges is concerned. However, if the decision has affirmed the denial of candidacy or termination of accreditation, the institution may file an appeal with the President of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges through the President of the Commission in accordance with the provisions of Article VI of the Constitution of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

EDITED POLICIES

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

**POLICY ON COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES**
(Adopted January 1999; Edited August 2007)

Complaints against the Commission are limited to complaints regarding the agency's standards, criteria, procedures, or actions of staff or any other Commission representative. In order to be considered a formal complaint against the Commission, a complaint must involve issues broader than a concern about a specific institutional action or a specific evaluation team.

The complaint must be written, and must state clearly the nature of the complaint, and it must be signed. The President, on behalf of the Commission, responds to each complaint made against the Commission within 30 days of receipt of the complaint (if more time than this is required to complete an investigation, the complainant is notified within the initial 30 days); reports the nature and disposition of any complaints to the Chair of the Commission; and compiles annually a list, available to the public on request, which summarizes the nature and disposition of any such complaints. Upon advice of counsel, the Commission retains the right to withhold public disclosure of information if potential legal action is involved in the complaint.

If a complaint filed against the Commission under the provisions of this section is not resolved by the President, the Commission chair shall designate one or more persons to review the handling of the complaint. The Commission shall review the report of the designated reviewer(s) and shall notify the complainant and the President of its response.

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

POLICY ON REVIEW OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

(Adopted June 1996, Revised June 1998, January 1999, June 2001, January 2007, Edited October 2007)

The Accrediting Commission conducts systematic and comprehensive study of the utility, effectiveness, relevance, and consistency of its standards and practices.

The Commission assesses its standards normally every six years. Independent review is commissioned prior to each cycle so that the revision may be informed by the findings of that research.

The process for review of accreditation standards:

1. Examines whether the standards are adequate to evaluate educational quality;
2. Focuses on the relationship of the standards to the quality of educational/training programs and their relevance to student needs;
3. Examines each standard and the standards as a whole; and
4. Involves all of the agency's relevant constituencies.

Each such review solicits comments from member institutions and participants in the processes of accreditation. The process seeks to incorporate state of the art institutional evaluation, as practiced by academic quality assurance and accrediting agencies, and by business and industry into standards revisions. Information is sought to measure:

1. Institutional perceptions about validity and utility of standards;
2. Consistency of application of standards;
3. Consistency of application of the Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions;
4. Degree of confidence in the processes used by the evaluation teams and the Commission; and
5. Effects of Commission actions and team recommendations on institutional practices.

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

POLICY ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACCJC AND MEMBER INSTITUTIONS IN THE ACCREDITING PROCESS

(Adopted January 2005, Edited August 2007 and October 2007)

Background

Students, the public, higher education bodies, and various levels of government need assurance that an accredited institution is of high quality and possesses integrity. American higher education has chosen to use a voluntary, nongovernmental, self-regulatory process to provide this assurance. Such a process must balance institutional autonomy, independence, and freedom with an institution's responsibilities to its various constituencies. Therefore, the process must carefully delineate the rights and responsibilities of both the accrediting bodies and the institutions they accredit. Mutual understanding and respect for the rights and responsibilities of each party will ensure that higher education remains fundamentally sound, responsible, responsive, and effective, so that the public may have confidence in the integrity and quality of educational institutions with a minimum need for government regulations.

Policy

ACCJC is committed to partnering with member institutions in a voluntary non-governmental accreditation process that results in mutual commitment to self-regulation and continuous institutional improvement. ACCJC and its member institutions share rights and responsibilities to develop and promulgate accreditation standards and an agreed-upon accrediting process for institutional review.

Policy Elements

A. Development and Promulgation of Standards

ACCJC has the responsibility to: provide opportunities for broad participation of affected constituencies in the development and acceptance of standards and policies; develop standards which are consistent with the purposes of accreditation, sufficiently flexible to allow diversity and effective program development, and allow and encourage institutional/programmatic freedom and autonomy; allow the institution to exercise its rights within a reasonable set of parameters relevant to the quality of education; and conduct periodic reviews of the standards.

Member institutions have the responsibility to participate in development of standards and policies and in their periodic reviews.

B. Protocols

ACCJC has the responsibility to routinely provide copies of all correspondence pertaining to that institution to the Chief Executive Officer and, where appropriate, to the Accreditation Liaison Officer; and refrain from advertising or soliciting applications for accreditation from institutions.

E. Decisions

Member institutions have the right to withdraw a request for any status of accreditation at any time prior to the decision on that request. Member institutions also have the right to appeal an accrediting decision in accordance with the policies of the ACCJC and to maintain its accredited status during the appeal. Member institutions have the right to withdraw from Commission membership by sending a written notice to the Commission of the intent to withdraw as of the end of college semester or term. Ordinarily, the notice must be sent with adequate time for the Commission to approve the request at its next scheduled meeting prior to anticipated date of withdrawal of accreditation.

ACCJC has the responsibility to: permit the withdrawal of a request for any status of accreditation at any time prior to the decision on that request; require an institution voluntarily withdrawing from Commission membership to take appropriate steps to notify its student body, the Secretary of Education, appropriate state licensing and authorizing agencies, and the public, and where appropriate to follow the Commission's "Policy on Closing an Institution"; make decisions solely on the basis of published standards, policies, and procedures using information available and made known to the institution; avoid conflicts of interest in the decision-making process; and ensure the confidentiality of the deliberations in which accrediting decisions are made, and to observe due process in all deliberations;

ACCJC also has the responsibility to: notify institutions promptly in writing of accrediting decisions, giving reasons for the actions; ensure that the communication of the final accrediting decision identifies and clearly distinguishes between statements directly related to quality assessment and those representing suggestions for quality improvement; publish accrediting decisions, both affirmative and negative, except for initial denial of candidacy or eligibility (which are not made public); maintain the confidentiality of the team report; and require that corrective action be taken if an institution releases information misrepresenting or distorting any accreditation action taken by ACCJC or the status of its affiliation with ACCJC. If the institution is not prompt in taking corrective action, the accrediting body may further release a public statement providing the correct information;

F. Follow-Up

The ACCJC has the right to take action to ensure that member institutions meet their responsibilities and request periodic reports, special reports, additional visits, and consultative activities relevant to the institution's accreditation status. ACCJC has the right to request the reevaluation of an institution at any time as a means for monitoring specific developments within an institution between comprehensive evaluations.

The ACCJC has the responsibility to provide written notice to the institution of the action taken in relation to a special report or visit, assist and stimulate improvement of the educational effectiveness of an institution, and work with the institution to identify appropriate assistance.

**BYLAWS FOR THE
ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES,
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

(Adopted, June 1998; Revised January 1999, January 2001, January 2002, June 2002;
January 2004; Edited October 2007)

ARTICLE I

PURPOSE

Section 1. Name. The name of this organization shall be the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. It shall be referred to throughout these bylaws as the "Commission."

Section 2. Purpose. The purposes of the Commission shall be the evaluation of member institutions to assure the educational community, the general public, and other organizations and agencies that an institution has clearly defined objectives appropriate to higher education; has established conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected; appears in fact to be accomplishing them substantially; is so organized, staffed, and supported that it can be expected to continue to do so; and demonstrates that it meets Commission standards. The Commission encourages and supports institutional development and improvement through self study and periodic evaluation by qualified peer professionals.

ARTICLE II

ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS

Section 1. Member Institutions. The member institutions of the Commission shall consist of all of the institutions accredited by the Commission. In the event an institution loses its accreditation for any reason, its membership status shall cease immediately.

Section 2. Scope. The Commission accredits associate degree granting institutions in California, Hawaii, the Territories of Guam and American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

submit the following:

- a. A letter of application stating the basis for interest in the Commission.
- b. A completed ACCJC data/biographical form. (Service as a Commissioner will be considered for Commissioners seeking a second term.)
- c. A resume and/or letter of recommendation.

Section 4. Commissioner Selection Committee. The Commissioner Selection Committee shall consist of seven members including at least two administrators, two faculty members, and two representatives of the public. The Commission Chair shall appoint three Commissioner Selection Committee members, two from the Commission and one from the private institutions it accredits, and will designate one to be the chair. The Pacific Postsecondary Education Council shall appoint one member. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, the California Chief Executive Officers, the California Community College Trustees, and the Hawaii Community College Academic Senate Chairs shall appoint whatever additional faculty, administrators, and representatives of the public are required to complete the composition of the Commissioner Selection Committee. The Committee shall be constituted in the spring of each year. The President serves as the nonvoting secretary to the committee.

The Commissioner Selection Committee meets annually to consider nominees and applicants and to make appointments to the Commission. In order to carry out its responsibilities the committee conducts the following activities.

- selects from the nominees of the California Community College Chancellor and the University of Hawaii Community College Chancellors,
- selects from the Senior College Commission and Schools Commission nominees,
- appoints the Commissioners from the remaining membership categories.

Vacancies occurring after the meeting of the Commissioner Selection Committee and before the winter Commission meeting may be filled by the Commissioner Selection Committee by reviewing the pool of applicants and nominations from the most recent selection process if the committee determines that the pool is adequately representative of the region. In the event that the pool is deemed deficient, the vacancy(s) will be announced according to the process described above.

Section 5. Officers. Commission officers shall consist of the chairperson, the vice chairperson, and the chairperson of the Budget and Personnel Committee.

The position of Commission chair is filled by the succession of the vice chair. The Commission vice chairperson is elected by the Commission and succeeds to the office of chairperson when that office becomes vacant. He or she then serves a two-year term as chairperson. No member of the Commission may serve as its chairperson for longer than

Section 3. Minutes. The Commission shall maintain minutes of all of its meetings. The Commission shall designate those subjects which are to be discussed in executive and public session.

Section 4. Commission Actions. At the call of the Commission Chair, and subject to prior consent setting forth such action by two-thirds of the Commission then in office, executed in writing, FAX, e-mail, telephone, or other electronic means, actions required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Commission may be taken without a meeting. Such consent, the reasons therefore, and the substance of the Commission action is filed with the minutes of proceedings of the Commission.

ARTICLE V

COMMITTEES

The Executive Committee of the Commission shall be comprised of the Commission chair, the vice chair, and the chair of the Budget and Personnel Committee. The committee shall serve as council to the President between Commission meetings.

The Commission shall be served by such standing and *ad hoc* committees as it creates. *Ad hoc* committees may be created at the discretion of the Commission chair, but their creation, functions, and authority must be ratified by a simple majority of the Commission membership at the first Commission meeting following the creation of the *ad hoc* committee.

Standing committees shall be authorized by a simple majority of the Commission and may be dissolved by the same margin of the Commission. The Commission may charge a standing committee with authority to act on its behalf. No Standing Committee membership may be comprised of a majority of the Commission. Members and chairs of standing committees are appointed by the Commission chairperson and serve two-year terms. Current standing committees of the Commission are the Budget and Personnel Committee, the Committee on Substantive Change, the Policy Committee, and the Evaluation and Planning Committee. The Commissioner Selection Committee is constituted at regular intervals as described in Article III, Section 4, above.

ARTICLE VI

STANDING RULES

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

POLICY ON PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

(Adopted June 1999; Edited June 2002; Revised January 2003; Edited June 2005;
Revised January 2006, Edited October 2007)

Background

The Commission believes that the two major responsibilities of institutional accreditation are quality assurance to the public and improvement of member institutions. Accreditation systematically accomplishes these purposes through standards of good practice, institutional self study, external peer review and recommendations, Commission actions, and follow-up. The purpose of this policy is to strengthen the ability of institutions and the Commission to fulfill mutual obligations to inform, to educate, and to enhance the level of public confidence in higher education institutions in the process and outcomes of voluntary, non-governmental accreditation, within the region and across regions. Specifically, the goals are:

1. To make a meaningful contribution to the body of information available to consumers of higher education services and to facilitate easier access to such information;
2. To provide institutions with a way to communicate with their multiple publics regarding accreditation matters; and
3. To enhance public understanding of accreditation, and thereby to enhance public confidence in institutions of higher education through peer review, self regulation, and institutional improvement.

Policy

The Commission adheres to certain principles. These principles are:

1. Both the Commission and the institution have responsibilities to provide information about institutional quality to the public.
2. The Commission and the institution should maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality during the various stages of the accreditation process that lead to the Commission's decision. The accreditation process must occur within a context of trust and confidentiality if it is to result in an accurate appraisal of institutional quality. The efficacy of the accreditation process requires that institutions provide accurate information, candid self-analyses, and evidence of the degree to which they meet standards. It also requires that the Team Report provide candid and targeted analysis and recommendations for improvement.

Candidacy and Initial Accreditation Manual, Directory or other appropriate publications, each type of accreditation and candidacy granted by the Commission, the procedures for applying for accreditation or candidacy, the criteria and procedures used by the Commission determining whether to grant, reaffirm, deny, or take any other action related to the accredited status of institutions; the names, academic and professional qualifications, and relevant employment and organizational affiliations of the Commission and principal staff; the institutions the Commission currently accredits or recognizes in candidacy status; and the date when the Commission will next review or consider the accreditation or candidacy of each institution. Other matters of public interest are the domain of the institution.

Under the provisions of the U.S. Secretary's Procedures and Criteria for the Recognition of Accrediting Agencies (§602.2), only denial, or termination of accreditation or candidacy are defined as adverse actions by the Commission. Appeals of denial or termination are governed by the provisions of the WASC Constitution.

B. WASC Directory Information

The WASC Directory information is published on the ACCJC website and includes the name of the institution and location, the chief executive officer, the form of control, each type of accreditation or pre-accreditation held by the institution, the date of initial accreditation, and the date of the next comprehensive review.

C. Statement of Accredited Status.

The Commission has adopted a set of basic information elements that will be made available in Commission publications, or on request, about the accredited status of individual institutions. This information will be recorded and disseminated in a common format. A Statement of Accredited Status will be prepared for each member institution. A Statement of Accredited Status will also be available to the public on request. The Statement includes information about the nature of the institution and its scope, its accredited status, the nature of Commission actions regarding the institution, a definition of the meaning of the accredited status, and a discussion of any terms that might require explanation.

D. Commission Responsibilities to the Institution.

The Commission will prepare information for the institution which outlines the reasons for the action, the follow-up and the monitoring activities which will be required, and the time frame within which the institution must remedy the conditions which led to the action.

If an institution cannot document that it is in compliance with the standards, eligibility

- B. The Commission provides each institution under review with a roster of the team members, including their positions and institutional affiliations. Institutions may object to a proposed team member for cause. These rosters are updated regularly as team membership is adjusted.
- C. The Commission requires the college to make public the institutional self study report, the team report, and the Commission action letter. The Commission itself does not make public the self study report, the team report and the Commission action letter, unless the institution has misrepresented the findings of the team report, or failed to make the team report, Commission action letter or self study report public. Should the institution or others issue selective and biased releases or use the public forum to take issue with Commission actions, the Commission and its staff will be free to make all the documents public. In the event of such misrepresentation, or failure to disclose, the Commission is free to disclose the reports and provide accurate statements about the institution's accredited status.
- D. The Commission does not disclose any information about an institution's potential accredited status before a Commission action is taken. Information about actions under review or appeal (denial of candidacy or initial accreditation, or termination of accreditation) will not be disclosed until a final decision is rendered, unless required by federal regulation. Review and Appeal procedures are found in the Policy on Review of Commission Actions.
- E. The institutional file in the Commission office is part of the private relationship with the institution and is therefore not available to the public. Upon request, the Commission will disclose the number of complaints received about the institution since the last comprehensive evaluation, the general nature of those complaints, and their resolution or status. In accordance with its policy on Student and Public Complaints against Institutions (*Accreditation Reference Handbook*), the Commission will only include in that disclosure formal, signed complaints that are within the Commission's jurisdiction and which have been referred to the institution. Multiple complaints about a single issue will be assessed to determine how those complaints should be recorded. The Commission informs the institution when such an inquiry is received.
- F. In order to assure the accuracy and appropriateness of institutional information which is made public, the Commission expects team members to keep confidential all institutional information read or heard before, during, and after the team visit. Except in the context of Commission work, team members are limited in their discussion to information contained in the public reports. Sources of information that should remain confidential include previous college and team reports; the current self study report; interviews and written communication with campus personnel, students, trustees, and community members; and team discussions.

responsibility.

I. Institutional Self Study and other Accreditation Reports

- A. Self Studies. The Commission relies on the strong sense of collegiality, mutual respect, and trust in its relations with member institutions. The privilege of self-regulation requires openness with the public as well.

The self study report is the property of the institution which developed it, but the self study report should receive wide distribution within the institution. The Commission recognizes that some institutions may be governed by public disclosure statutes and expects that institutions will conduct themselves in accord with those laws and regulations.

- B. Team Reports. The Commission requires that institutions share the findings and recommendations that result from the accreditation process widely throughout the institution, especially with those that contributed to the self study. Once an on-site evaluation is complete, institutions are required to make the report public and readily available through a wide distribution system. The institution is required to publicize the location of the team reports. Any excerpting of team reports for use by those outside the institution must be accompanied by explanatory information which discusses the complete context of accreditation. Any use of the team reports which misquotes, misleads, or misrepresents findings or recommendations is grounds for Commission release of the complete team report.

II. On-Site Evaluation

The Commission requires that the chief executive officer notify the campus community of the date and purpose of each comprehensive evaluation and any follow-up activity or reports requested by the Commission. Key elements in that notification to the campus community should include the following:

1. Notice of the opportunity for submission of third-party comments by the public and the process for doing so.
2. Information regarding where and how the Commission's Standards of Accreditation may be accessed at the institution.
3. Information regarding the implementation of the institutional self study, and the development of the self study report, and a call for widespread participation.
4. Information regarding the team visit, team composition, dates of the visit, team schedule and activities. Institutions are expected to publicize times and

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

POLICY ON RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

(Adopted June 1996, Revised January 1998, Edited June 2002, August 2007 and October 2007)

The Commission has sought recognition and periodically seeks renewal of recognition by the Secretary of Education, in order that member institutions achieve and maintain eligibility to participate in programs such as HEA Title IV student financial aid. The Commission provides, upon request from the Secretary, any information sought regarding institutional compliance with HEA Title IV regulations.

The Commission provides written notification to the Secretary of Education, appropriate state licensing or authorizing agencies and accrediting bodies, and the public no later than 30 days after it makes a decision on the accredited status of an institution. In cases where the Commission has taken final action to terminate, deny, or accept the withdrawal of accreditation, to terminate, deny or accept the withdrawal of candidacy, or to place the institution on probation or show cause, the Commission provides written notification to the Secretary of Education, appropriate state licensing or authorizing agencies, and accrediting bodies at the same time the institution is notified of such a final action.

The Commission provides written explanation to the Secretary of Education within 30 days of its decision to grant accreditation or preaccreditation to an institution if the Commission knows or has reasonable cause to know that the institution is the subject of a pending or final action brought by a state agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the state, a decision by a recognized accrediting body to deny accreditation or preaccreditation, a pending or final action brought by a recognized accrediting body to suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation, or probation or equivalent status imposed by a recognized accrediting agency.

No later than 60 days after a decision to take adverse action on an institution, the Commission will make available to the Secretary, the appropriate licensing or authorizing agency, and the public upon request, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the Commission's decision, and the comments, if any, that the affected institution may wish to make with regard to that decision.

Copies of publications such as the Commission Newsletter are routinely sent to the state and federal agencies with which the Commission communicates. The WASC Directory, which is updated annually, is available on the ACCJC web site.

The Commission maintains regular communication with the Department of Education and relevant state agencies. It responds to inquiries from government agencies and forwards responses to complaints against institutions that have been routed to the Commission by those agencies.

the event clear evidence of Title IV fraud and abuse is obtained by the Commission, that information is forwarded to the Department of Education.

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

POLICY ON STUDENT AND PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AGAINST INSTITUTIONS
(Adopted June 1972, Revised January 1984, January 1993, edited October 1997, Revised June 2001; Edited August 2007)

Accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges is an expression of confidence that an institution is satisfactorily achieving its objectives, and that it meets or exceeds the Commission's standards and abides by Commission policies. The Commission is concerned with institutional integrity and with performance consistent with Commission standards and policies. While it cannot intervene in the internal procedures of institutions or act as a regulatory body, the Commission can and does respond to complaints regarding allegations of conditions at affiliated institutions that raise significant questions about the institution's compliance with the standards expected of an accredited institution.

The Commission does not consider allegations concerning the personal lives of individuals connected with its affiliated institutions. It assumes no responsibility for adjudicating isolated individual grievances between students, faculty, or members of the public and individual institutions. The Commission will not act as a court of appeal in matters of admission, granting or transfer of academic credit, grades, fees, student financial aid, student discipline, collective bargaining, faculty appointments, promotion, tenure and dismissals or similar matters.

Complaints are considered only when made in writing, when the complainant is clearly identified, and the complainant's address is included. Substantial evidence should be included in support of the allegation that the institution is in significant violation of the Commission's standards and policies. Such evidence should state relevant and provable facts. The Commission requires that each affiliated institution have in place student grievance and public complaint policies and procedures that are reasonable, fairly administered, and well publicized. The complainant should demonstrate that a serious effort has been made to pursue all review procedures provided by the institution.

When the Commission receives a complaint about a candidate or accredited institution, it reviews that information to determine if it is relevant to the compliance of that institution with Commission standards and policies. If appropriate, such information may be referred to the institution and/or to the visiting team next scheduled to evaluate the institution. The Commission at all times reserves the right to request information of an affiliated institution and to visit that institution for purposes of fact-finding, consistent with Commission policy. If Commission investigation yields credible evidence that indicates a systemic problem that calls into question the institution's ability to meet Commission standards and policies, the Commission may invoke the sanctions provided for in policy.

5. The complainant and the institution will be notified of the outcome of the review of the complaint.

- a. If the complaint is investigated further, as in 4.b above, the complainant and the institution will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within ten days.

Prior to the Commission's disposition of the complaint, the institution will have an opportunity to respond in writing within thirty days to the findings of the investigation. The complainant and the institution involved will be notified of the decision. The decision as communicated by the President is final.

- b. If the complaint was referred to ACCJC by another agency, that agency will receive copies of correspondence that state the outcome of the complaint within ten days.

6. The Commission will keep a record of student and public complaints against member institutions. Commission staff will report to the Commission annually regarding the status and resolution of student and public complaints against member institutions. At the time of an institution's comprehensive evaluation, a summary of any complaints will be provided to the team chair for consideration by the evaluation team.