Re: Accrediting Commission Report
August 2020 Commission Meeting
(via email distribution)

Dear ACCET Members and Other Colleagues:

This letter provides information regarding actions taken by the ACCET Accrediting Commission at its August 2020 meeting. Specific reports relative to the August 2020 Commission meeting are available on the ACCET website under the "Commission" tab, including: (1) Final Actions Taken by the Commission (referenced by institution), (2) Summary Statistics of Actions Taken by the Commission, and (3) a copy of this Accrediting Commission Report, which describes new and/or revised ACCET policy documents considered by the Commission for final approval or call for comment. Also available on the website is a request for written comments relative to institutions scheduled for consideration of accreditation at the Commission's December 2020 and April 2021 meetings.

A summary of Commission actions taken at the August 2020 meeting regarding ACCET policies is provided below, including: (1) final documents approved by the Commission (available on the ACCET website under "Documents and Forms") and (2) call for comment on proposed revisions to policy documents.

As a reminder, the Commission's Standards and Policy Review Committee (SPRC) conducts an ongoing review of each ACCET policy document at least every five years. Additionally, SPRC considers specific policy documents for review and revision to address governmental regulatory requirements, arising issues of concern, and/or the need for additional policy guidance. Member institutions and other interested parties are invited and encouraged to submit their written comments to proposed changes to ACCET policies and standards (available on the ACCET website under "News").

FINAL APPROVAL

1. **Document 5 – <u>Guidelines for the Utilization of External Consultants in the Accreditation Process</u>**

    Approved are changes to clarify the limited role of any consultant, as follows: *"If an institution chooses to use a consultant for accreditation purposes, the consultant must not be present at the institution and/or participate during any part of the on-site or virtual evaluation team visit, and the evaluation team will communicate only directly with the management and employees of the institution."*

2. **Document 8.1 Pilot – <u>Preparation Checklist for ACCET Virtual Evaluation Visit</u>**

    Proposed is a pilot document to be utilized for virtual visits to be conducted in the December 2020 review cycle. This draft document identifies items to be provided for team review and specific instruction for uploading these documents in advance of the visit.

3. **Document 26 - <u>Policy on Additional Locations and Changes of Location</u>**

    Approved are revisions: (a) authorizing the Program Review Committee, instead of the Executive Committee, to determine whether to grant interim approval of a new branch and final approval of an auxiliary classroom; and (b) codifying the approval process for the re-designation of a main campus.

4. **Document 32 – <u>Teach Out/Closure Policy</u>**

   Approved are extensive revisions, including: (a) modified language in the introductory paragraphs, (b) the minimum requirements for all teach-out plans, including clarification as to the information to be provided as part of the list of currently enrolled students, and (c) additional requirements that may be required, including: (i) documentation relative to currently enrolled students, (ii) a staffing plan for the teach-out, and (3) revenue and expenses projections during the period of the teach-out.

5. **Document 16.1 – <u>Transfer of Credit Policy Checklist</u>**

   Approved is a new checklist to be completed by the visit team to facilitate the review and reporting of whether the institution's transfer of credit policy is consistent with ACCET requirements.

6. **Document 31.1 – <u>Cancellation and Refund Policy Checklist</u>**

   Approved is a new checklist to be completed by the visit team to facilitate the review and reporting of whether the institution's cancellation and refund policy is consistent with ACCET requirements.

7. **Document 31.1 ESOL – <u>Cancellation and Refund Policy Checklist</u>**

   Approved is a new checklist to be completed by the visit team to facilitate the review and reporting of whether the institution's cancellation and refund policy is consistent with ACCET requirements.

8. **Document 35.1 – <u>Attendance Policy Checklist</u>**

   Approved is a new checklist to be completed by the visit team to facilitate the review and reporting of whether the institution's attendance policy is consistent with ACCET requirements.

CALL FOR COMMENT

1. **<u>Document 3.CBE – Competency-Based Education (CBE) Template</u>**

   Proposed is a Competency-Based Education (CBE) Template for institutions offering courses and/or programs using the CBE methodology. The template expands upon the ACCET Standards by adding Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements in order to elicit a more relevant and valid self-evaluation of the institution and emphasize those standards where unique characteristics are identified for competency-based instruction.

   Proposed is a course/credit-based approach to competency-based education. The template states: "*Students progress through competency-based education by demonstrating competencies specified at the course and/or program level. This is known as a course/credit-based approach to CBE which is supported by ACCET processes. (Note: ACCET does not support a direct assessment approach to CBE at this time.)*"

   This document was prepared by a Competency-Based Education Taskforce with significant CBE expertise and experience.

2. **Document 25 – <u>Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses</u>**

   Proposed is to add the following requirements that are similar to those for occupational associate degrees: "*An ACCET accredited institution that offers applied bachelor's degree programs must provide the general education courses necessary to meet the specific degree requirements by: (1) delivering the*

general education courses through the institution and/or (2) establishing an executed articulation agreement with a degree-granting institution that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education whereby the degree-granting institution delivers the general education course required for the applied bachelor's degree." Also proposed is to identify the maximum number of credits (50%) that may be awarded for prior learning and transferred into an applied bachelor's degree program.

3. **Document 28.3 – <u>Completion and Placement Verification</u>**

Proposed is to convert the document from a pilot policy, with some modifications. As proposed, *"an extra team member will be added to the visit team to assist with the completion and verification process for any initial or reaccreditation visit to a campus with an enrollment of 350 or higher in vocational programs reported for the "current year" on Document 12b."*

Further, *"The Commission may require a third-party verification of placements for any initial or reaccreditation applicant as part of the on-site review or interim reporting process."*

4. **Document 31.AVOC – <u>Cancellation and Refund Policy</u>**

For ease of review, proposed is a new separate document that identifies the cancellation and refund policy for avocational programs, except avocational ESOL programs.

5. **Document 38 – <u>Certification and Licensing Policy</u>**

Proposed is to add language requiring institutions to disclose whether program graduates will be eligible to apply for any mandatory certification and licensing, as required by new federal regulations (effective July 1, 2020).