



ACCREDITING COMMISSION for COMMUNITY and JUNIOR COLLEGES
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Richard Winn, Interim President
Raúl Rodríguez, Chair

January 26, 2017

MEMO TO: Member Institutions: Chief Executive Officers, Chancellors,
Accreditation Liaison Officers

COPY TO: U.S. Department of Education, Accrediting Agencies, Governmental
Agencies and Others Organizations

FROM: Stephanie Droker, Ed.D.

SUBJECT: Commission Actions on Policies and Bylaws

At its January 2017 meeting, the Commission considered and approved three policies for first reading. Please refer to the attached memorandum about the period for providing comment on the proposed policies. The attached memorandum also describes the policies which were approved, recent amendments to the ACCJC Bylaws, and two policies which have been deleted.

We request that you publicize the information in this memo at your institution. Please note that comment is invited from the field on the three first reading policies listed below. A window of time through April 15, 2017 has been established for comment. Information about how to submit comment is included below.

The Policy Committee is a standing committee of the Commission. Through Commission processes, the Policy Committee oversees the ongoing review and updating of Commission policy. Commission procedures require that proposed institutional policy changes and/or new policies be considered by the Commission in a two-meeting process. At the first meeting, new policies and policy changes are discussed and modifications are made as appropriate (i.e., "First Reading"). These policies are then circulated to ACCJC accredited institutions via email, and to other interested parties via the online posting of Recent Commission Actions, for review and comment before presentation at the next Commission meeting for second reading and adoption.

When policy changes are needed in order to align with federal regulations or guidelines, they must be made expeditiously; these changes can be made by the Commission without the normal First Reading/Second Reading process for institutional policies. If these changes are made by Commission action between regular meetings, then the changes are reported to the field at the next Commission meeting. New or revised operational policies of the ACCJC are adopted by a vote of the Commission in Public Session. Amendments to ACCJC Bylaws are made in accordance with Bylaws requirements.

These policies are attached for your reference, and are also posted on the ACCJC website at: <http://www.accjc.org/actions-on-policy>.

The institutional policies and operational policies of the Commission are published annually in the *Accreditation Reference Handbook (ARH)* along with Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards. The publication is completed after the June Commission meeting each year. The ARH is available online at www.accjc.org.

Comment Invited

The policies considered for first reading, as well as the adopted policies and organizational documents, are attached to the electronic version of this correspondence emailed to Chief Executive Officers and Accreditation Liaison Officers. The policies can also be found online at www.accjc.org under 'Recent Commission Actions,' 'Actions on Policy.'

Please note: The Commission invites comment on the first reading policies through April 15, 2017, 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.

There is no special form for comments on policy. Comments may be made in written form and mailed, FAXed, or emailed to one of the following addresses:

- Email: accjc@accjc.org
- FAX: 415-506-0238
- Mail: ACCJC, Comment on Policy, 10 Commercial Blvd. Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949

Items for First Read

- 1. Revision of the Policy on Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions –**
This policy has been revised for clarity and new language has been added to address Commission actions on institutions where deficiencies have been identified. All references to the Policy on Review of Commission Actions have been deleted (see policy deletion under items for second read of this memo).
- 2. Policy on Complaints Against the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges –** A minor revision to this policy adds language to allow the President of the ACCJC to delegate responsibility for providing a response to a complaint.
- 3. Policy on the Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions –** Language to the section on third party comments has been revised to further clarify the difference between a third party comment and a complaint against an institution.

Items for Second Read

- 1. Deletion of the Policy on Review of Commission Actions –** This policy is being deleted in order to align to the appeal process for institutions whose candidacy or accredited status may be withdrawn by the ACCJC, which is stipulated in the Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions.

Discussion on the elimination of the Policy on Review of Commission Actions commenced during the June and March Commission meetings which directed staff to move forward with the policy change. It is important that the Policy on Review of Commission Actions be eliminated at the same time that the appeal process of the Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions is being reviewed.

2. Deletion of the Policy on Interregional Policies on the Accreditation of Institutions Operating Across Regions

Policy is being deleted as it no longer is relevant.

Bylaws Revisions

1. Commission Composition

Background

Discussions regarding changes to the Commission's membership and composition have occurred formally and informally amongst different groups over the last couple of years. At the Commissioner Development Workshop in March 2016, Commissioners engaged in a dialog that focused on the need for individuals serving on the Commission to have specialized knowledge, specifically in financial expertise and academic affairs, respectively.

It was suggested that Commission composition be changed to allocate seats to an individual serving as a chief financial officer, or someone possessing the certifications or significant financial expertise at the level of a chief financial officer or business officer, and a chief instructional officer or chief academic officer.

Change to the Commission size and composition was also recommended by CEO Work Group 1. In their report, "A Preliminary Report to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges" (June 2016), California Community College CEOs recommended that the ACCJC Commission membership "be reviewed in order to provide additional expertise and balance to better support the decision-making process" (p. 45).

Recommendation

To increase the effectiveness of the Commission, it is suggested that the ACCJC Bylaws be revised to relabel the 3 administrator members to 3 chief executive officers. The current 2 public representative slots would be reallocated as 1 financial member and 1 instruction member. The remaining 3 slots for public representatives would stay as-is in order to meet the federal regulatory requirements for such members.

2. Officers

Language has been added to clarify the selection process for officers, including the time frame when the election will occur, as well as increasing the word count for the written statement required to be submitted by each interested nominee.

3. Committees

The first paragraph of this section has been revised to further ensure continuity of leadership on the executive committee.

4. Appeals

Section 1 has been revised to further align with federal regulations on the appeal processes (and align to the ACCJC Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions).

Revisions to Align With U.S. Department of Education Policy

Revision of the Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions

Proposed amendment to the Commission's Restoration Policy to include an appeal process for institutions whose accreditation is not reaffirmed following a period of restoration. Also proposed is the elimination of review of a decision to withdraw accreditation.

Attachments