August 31, 2015

Re: Accrediting Commission Report
August 2015 Meeting
(via email distribution)

Dear ACCET Members and Other Colleagues:

This letter provides information regarding actions undertaken by the ACCET Accrediting Commission at its August 2015 meeting. Specific reports relative to the August 2015 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 sent out for comment, including a call for comment on proposed revisions to the Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (ASER) and Templates. Also available on the website is a request for written comments relative to institutions scheduled for consideration of accreditation at the Commission's December 2015 and April 2016 meetings.

A synopsis of the Commission's actions on ACCET policies undertaken at the August 2015 meetings is included as follows: (1) final documents approved by the Commission (available on the ACCET website under "Documents and Forms"), (2) call for comment on proposed revisions to policy documents, and (3) the five-year review of ACCET Standards for Accreditation.

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 DOCUMENTS

1. **Document 2.1 – Principle of Ethics for ACCET Institutions**

   A change was made to add a principle prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, or religion.

2. **Document 23 - Admissions Requirements and Ability to Benefit**

   Revisions were made to reflect changes in federal regulations regarding the eligibility of non-high school graduates for Title IV federal financial aid.

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

Changes were made to: (a) establish a definition for e-learning (which has limited instructor-student interaction) and an approval process for e-learning delivered by avocational institutions, including selected initial applicants, (b) update the description of interactive distance learning, (c) eliminate the 25% limit on IDL enrollments for institutions with initial approval to offer IDL, but specify that documented evidence of successful student outcomes must be provided before obtaining approval for subsequent IDL programs.

4. **Document 25.E-learning – <u>Application for E-learning Program/Course</u>**

A new application for e-learning was approved which is modeled after the application for interactive distance learning.

5. **Document 3.E-learning – <u>E-learning Template</u>**

An e-learning template with Specific Field Criteria was approved which is modeled after the template for interactive distance learning.

6. **Document 3.IDL – <u>Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) Template</u>**

Changes were made to the introductory section to: (a) update the description for interactive distance learning, (b) eliminate reference to the 25% limit on IDL enrollments for institutions with initial approval to offer IDL, but specify that documented evidence of successful student outcomes must be provided, before obtaining approval for subsequent IDL programs. Changes were also made to the questions/statements for IDL, including questions pertaining to: (a) the use of learning management systems, (b) a retention strategy for IDL programs/courses, and (c) the tracking and monitoring of student academic progress.

Additional modifications were made, including: (a) changes to the definitions for branch campus, auxiliary classroom, and temporary avocational classroom to be consistent with the newly revised definitions in Document 26 – <u>Review and Approval of Additional Locations</u> and (b) the addition of definitions for interactive distance learning and e-learning, consistent with the definitions found in Document 25 – <u>Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses</u>.

7. **Document 27.1 – <u>Specific Requirements for Filing Financial Reports</u>**

Change were made to delete reference to "Alternative Financial Reporting" utilized by eligible institutions such as franchises of Dale Carnegie & Associates when they were separately accredited by ACCET.

8. **<u>Quality Assurance Visit (QAV) Report (Applicable to Vocational Institutions)</u>**

Changes were made to: (a) align the QAV report template with the templates for other on-site visits; (b) streamline the report by only describing the visit findings at the end of the document; (c) reorganize the document by placing first those sections that require advanced preparation by the Commission Representative; (d) change the name of the "Follow-Up Improvements" section to "Corrective Actions"; (e) require the institution to provide a narrative update relative to actions taken to address any weaknesses with ratings of 1 or 2 in the previous on-site team report; (f) provide more explicit instructions for verifying that the ownership structure approved by ACCET is accurate and unchanged; (g) modify the refund section to align with the refund review conducted as part of Document 50FA

– <u>On-Site Financial Aid Review</u> and 50FR – <u>On-Site Financial Review</u>; and (h) align the completion and placement section with other on-site visit reports.

9. **<u>Preparation Checklist and Questionnaire for the Quality Assurance Visit</u>**

Changes were made to provide more explicit instructions relative to the Preparation Checklist and Questionnaire, including a written narrative update by the institution relative to corrective actions taken to address any weaknesses with ratings of 1 or 2 in the previous on-site team report.

10. **<u>Quality Assurance Visit (QAV) Report (Applicable to Avocational Institutions)</u>**

Changes were made to: (a) align the QAV report template with the templates for other on-site visits; (b) streamline the report by only describing the visit findings at the end of the document; (c) reorganize the document by placing first those sections that require advanced preparation by the Commission Representative; (d) change the name of the "Follow-Up Improvements" section to "Corrective Actions"; (e) require the institution to provide a narrative update relative to actions taken to address any weaknesses with ratings of 1 or 2 in the previous on-site team report; (f) provide more explicit instructions for verifying that the ownership structure approved by ACCET is accurate and unchanged; (g) modify the refund section to align with the refund review conducted as part of 50FR – <u>On-Site Financial Review</u>; (h) add a section for the Review of Active Students to ensure that satisfactory academic progress is being monitored in accordance with ACCET policies, and (i) align the completion section with other on-site visit reports.

11. **<u>Preparation Checklist and Questionnaire for the Quality Assurance Visit (Avocational)</u>**

Changes were made to provide more explicit instructions relative to the Preparation Checklist and Questionnaire, including a written narrative update by the institution relative to corrective actions taken to address any weaknesses with ratings of 1 or 2 in the previous on-site team report.

<u>APPROVED FOR A VOTE OF THE MEMBERSHIP</u>[1]

1. **Document 2 – <u>Standards for Accreditation</u>**

Based on comments received following the April 2015 meeting, additional minor changes, refinements, and edits were made, including: (a) adding learning resources, (b) referencing any online admissions process, (c) changing "counseling" to "non-academic advising", (d) specifying that the assessment system be communicated to students at orientation and/or the beginning of the course/program, and (e) indicating that employer/sponsor feedback may be obtained through various means such as surveys, advisory. Comments were primarily positive regarding the original proposed changes to: (a) emphasize ACCET's commitment to institutional integrity, program quality, and successful student outcomes; (b) specify that ACCET's <u>Standards for Accreditation</u> and approved policies provide the criteria for the evaluation of institutions seeking to obtain or maintain accreditation; (c) modify the titles of the standards to more accurately reflect their content (e.g. Standard I – <u>Mission, Goals, and Planning</u> and Standard III – <u>Financial Capacity and Responsibility</u>); (d) reorganize the 33 standards to create a new Standard VIII – <u>Student Assessment and Achievement</u> (comprised of Performance Measurements, Attendance, and Student Progress) and Standard IX – <u>Institutional Effectiveness</u> (comprised of Student

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[1] The Commission approved the revised Document 2 – <u>Standards for Accreditation</u> to be presented for a vote of the ACCET membership scheduled for the Annual Business Meeting to be held on October 26, 2015 at the ACCET Annual Conference.

Satisfaction, Employer/Sponsor Satisfaction, Certification and Licensing, and Completion and Placement)**.**

CALL FOR COMMENT

1. **Document 3 – <u>Analytic Self-Evaluation Report</u> (3.1 vocational, 3.2 avocational, 3.3 Dale Carnegie, 3.4 avocational ESOL)**

   Proposed are modifications to the ASER questions that are designed to: (a) align with ACCET's policies and proposed new standards, (b) provide greater clarity, and (c) reduce redundancy and streamline the questions.

2. **Document 3.MT – <u>Massage Therapy Template</u>**

   No substantive changes are proposed. The proposed revisions are for purposes of clarity and to reflect changes in ACCET policies. Proposed are changes to the Specific Field Criteria and/or supplemental ASER questions/statements under the following four standards: IV-A <u>Educational Goals and Objectives,</u> VI-B <u>Supervision of Instruction</u>, VII-B <u>Admissions/Enrollment</u>, and IX-D <u>Completion and Job Placement</u>.

3. **Document 3.NAH – <u>Nursing and Allied Health Template</u>**

   Proposed changes are designed to increase clarity, reduce redundancy, and align with ACCET policies. Proposed are changes to the Specific Field Criteria and/or supplemental ASER questions/statements identified under the following four standards: IV-A <u>Educational Goals and Objectives</u>, IV-C <u>Externship/Internship</u>, V-C <u>Facilities,</u> and VII-B <u>Admissions/Enrollment</u>.

4. **Document 3.OAD – <u>Occupational Associate Degree Template</u>**

   Proposed are revisions to indicate that this category of degree includes, but is not limited to: the Associate of Applied Science Degree, the Associate of Occupational Studies Degree, and the Associate of Applied Technology Degree. Other proposed changes are to the Specific Field Criteria and/or supplemental ASER questions/statements identified under Standard IV-A <u>Educational Goals and Objectives</u> to include information contained in Document 25 – <u>Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses</u>.

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

   Proposed are changes to the section on "occupational associate degrees" for purposes of clarity and to align with information contained in Document 3.OAD – <u>Occupational Associate Degree Template</u>.

6. **Document 3.ESOL – <u>English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Template (fka IEP Template)</u>**

   Proposed changes are designed to: (a) increase clarity, (b) align with ACCET policies, and (c) identify alternative methods to measure ESOL programs against recognized benchmarks in order to improve and enhance the programs. Proposed are changes to delete the Specific Field Criteria and supplemental ASER questions/statements identified under the following four standards: I-A <u>Mission</u>, IV-B <u>Program/Instructional Materials</u>, IV-D <u>Curriculum Review/Revision</u>; VI-C <u>Instructor Orientation and Training</u>. Proposed are changes to the Specific Field Criteria and supplemental ASER questions/statements identified under the following seven standards: II-A <u>Governance,</u> IV-A <u>Educational Goals and Objectives,</u>

V-A Instructional Methods, VII-B Admissions/Enrollment, VII-D Student Services, VIII-A Performance Measurements, and VIII-C Student Progress.

7. **Document 3.VESL – Vocational English as a Second Language Template**

Proposed changes are designed to: (a) increase clarity, and (b) align with ACCET policies. Proposed are changes to delete the Specific Field Criteria and supplemental ASER questions/statements identified under the following three standards: IV-B Program/Instructional Materials, IV-D Curriculum Review/Revision, and VI-C Instructor Orientation and Training. Proposed are changes to the Specific Field Criteria and supplemental ASER questions/statements identified under the following standards: IV-A Educational Goals and Objectives, IV-A Program/Instructional Materials, V-A Instructional Methods, VII-B Admissions/Enrollment, VII-D Student Services, VIII-A Performance Measurements, and VIII-C Student Progress.

8. **Document 3.FL – Foreign Language Template**

Proposed changes are designed to: (a) increase clarity and (b) align with ACCET policies. Proposed are changes to delete the Specific Field Criteria and supplemental ASER questions/statements identified under the following four standards: I-A Mission, IV-B Program/Instructional Materials, IV-D Curriculum Review/Revision; VI-C Instructor Orientation and Training. Proposed are changes to the Specific Field Criteria and supplemental ASER questions/statements identified under the following seven standards: II-A Governance, IV-A Educational Goals and Objectives, V-A Instructional Methods, VII-B Admissions/Enrollment, VII-D Student Services, VIII-A Performance Measurements, and VIII-C Student Progress.

9. **Document 11 – Policies and Practices of the Accrediting Commission**

Proposed are modifications to the terminology and organization, but not the substance of the document. Proposed are changes to: (a) create a separate section on show cause that only addresses institutional show cause, (b) change the name of "programmatic show cause" to "program probation"; thereby reserving show cause to "institutional show cause", and (c) create a separate section for "program probation" that is consistent with the current description of "programmatic show cause".

10. **Document 26 – Policy on Additional Locations and Changes of Location**

Proposed is a change to identify the approval process for the addition of a branch as a result of a merger or purchase of an operational entity that is accredited by ACCET.

11. **Document 30 – Policy on Recruiting, Advertising, and Promotional Practices**

Proposed are changes to: (a) emphasize that all communications with prospective students must be ethical and honest, including communications through social media, the internet, and the website; (b) indicate that all advertising, promotional literature, and websites must only identify the institution and its courses/programs as approved by ACCET and, if applicable, the State licensing agency; and (c) direct institutions eligible to participate in Title IV federal financial aid to publish the disclosures and other information required by the U.S. Department of Education. Additionally, changes are proposed to the order of the bulleted items.

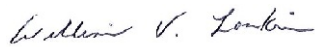## 12. Document 35 - <u>Policy on Attendance Requirements</u>

Proposed are changes to delete the "Standard" section and to require all institutions to provide: (a) if applicable, a description of excused absences, including a clear statement that excused absences will count as absences in the calculation of attendance rates and will not increase the maximum allowable absences; (b) if applicable, a policy relating to make-up work that is educationally sound and requires make-up to be comparable to the content, time, and delivery of the classes missed; and (c) a description of how students will be informed, on a regular and timely basis, of their progress in meeting the standards of attendance.

13. Document 28 – <u>Completion and Placement Policy</u>

Proposed are changes to: (a) clarify the definition for completion, (b) specify that higher-than-benchmark placement rates may provide an off-set for lower-than-benchmark completion rates, (c) reorganize the document to have a section on placement for vocational programs, (d) simplify and standardize placement attestations, (e) merge Document 28 and Document 28.1 – <u>Completion and Placement Statistics Definitions</u>, (f) expand the directions for transfers, and (h) specify that waivers that exceed the 15% limit will be factored into the adjusted waiver and placement rates reviewed by the Commission.

Thank you for your continued commitment and responsiveness to our ongoing efforts to refine and strengthen the ACCET standards, policies, and practices. Your contributions to this Partnership for Quality® are the foundation on which our combined accomplishments are measured. Thank you.

Sincerely,

William V. Larkin, Ed.D.
Executive Director