

**Update from Accreditation Workgroup II
Report to California Community Colleges Board of Governors
September 20, 2016**

WORKGROUP II: WESTERN REGION HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITING MODEL

Long-Range Goal

Facilitate communication between representatives of regional accreditors and institutional members from various sectors of higher education to pursue a model for regional accreditation that aligns all segments of higher education in the Western region.

Responsibilities

1. Workgroup will convene as quickly as possible to develop a framework for assessing the regional higher education accrediting landscape and determining the best approach for regional alignment and steps for implementation.
2. Workgroup will provide quarterly updates to the region beginning no later than September 1, 2016.

Members

California Community College CEOs

Cindy Miles Chancellor, Grossmont-Cuyamaca CCD, Convener
Lori Adrian President, Coastline CC (Coast CCD)
Sandra Caldwell President, Reedley College (State Center CCD)
Constance Carroll Chancellor, San Diego CCD
Debbie DiThomas Superintendent/President, Barstow CC
Ron Kraft Superintendent/President, Napa CCD
Willard Lewallen Superintendent/President, Hartnell CCD; ACCJC Commissioner
Dena Maloney Superintendent/President, El Camino CCD
Cheryl Marshall Chancellor, North Orange CCCD
Brian Murphy President, De Anza College (Foothill-DeAnza CCD)
Bill Scroggins President/CEO, Mt San Antonio CCD
Susan Sperling President, Chabot College (Chabot-Las Positas CCD)
Joe Wyse Superintendent/President, Shasta-Tehama-Trinity CCD

University of Hawaii community colleges

Lui Hokoana Chancellor, Maui College, University of Hawaii

Private Colleges with membership in ACCJC

Jeff Akens Retired President (Carrington College)

WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

Mary Ellen Petrisko WSCUC President
William Ladusaw Professor of Linguistics, UCSC; WSCUC Chair

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)

Raul Rodriguez Chancellor, Rancho Santiago CCD; ACCJC Vice-Chair

Ex-officio Member

Brian King Chancellor, Los Rios CCD

WORKGROUP II PROGRESS

May 19, 2016

14 members joined the first meeting: **12 CEOs** from public and private community colleges in California and Hawaii, plus the **CEO and Chair of WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)**.

We identified the **extensive experience and range of accreditation backgrounds** among participants, ranging from service as commissioners, team chairs, members of visiting teams, as well as individual college experiences with accreditation:

- 9 have worked with more than one regional accreditor
- 2 have served as commissioners
- All have led college reaffirmation of accreditation efforts
- 5 led new institutions through initial accreditation
- All have served on visiting teams, 7 as team chairs
- Additional expertise: Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), chief consultant to California State Legislature's review of Master Plan for Higher Education, California Assessment Institute Task Force to develop Handbook on Outcomes Assessment, president of WSCUC

Accreditation history and purpose were reviewed in the context of the current national structure and climate of accreditation. The history of the Western region with its segmented higher education accrediting system was explored. It was noted that the other 6 accreditors formed in the late 19th and early 20th Century. ACCJC became a separate commission in 1962 when community colleges were emerging from the K-12 system in the context of the California Master Plan for Higher Education.

The group noted significant changes in the higher education landscape:

- Blurring of lines between segments of education (e.g., dual/concurrent enrollment, community college baccalaureate, university colleges, associate degrees for transfer)
- Increasing pressure on accreditors from US Dept. of Education and Congress (e.g., demands for more public information regarding student achievement, completion rates, college costs, loan default rates, colleges "at risk" of sanction).

Representatives shared their desired outcomes and expectations for fulfilling the charge of Workgroup II for higher education accreditation alignment in the Western Region and formulated a work plan to research the following items:

- 1) How higher education "alignment" works in other commissions
- 2) The elements of a model higher education accrediting system for the Western Region

July 14, 2016

14 members, including a new representative from ACCJC (Commission Vice-Chair) began defining a "framework of options" for a model higher education system for the Western region. The group reviewed responses submitted by members and agreed on a set of shared principles guiding alignment and the following key elements for a model accrediting system:

- Collegial learning community with accrediting commission as partner
- Transparency in all aspects of commission governance and operations
- Well-developed infrastructure for training teams and colleges
- Highly experienced and qualified technical assistance assigned to each college
- Peer evaluation from colleagues who understand goal of accreditation is to improve institutions and serve the "whole student"
- Focus on clearly defined measures of student learning and success that transcend courses and disciplines.

- Opportunities for pathways and interactions between leaders, faculty, staff from all segments of higher education
- Demonstrated willingness and ability to respond to changing needs and demands, while remaining grounded in values.

The group worked on a “roadmap of options” for a regional accreditation model that aligns all segments of higher education in the Western region, and defined *steps required, timelines, pros, cons, and other resources required* for **four possible options**:

- 1) Stronger relationship between ACCJC and WASC Senior (WSCUC)**
- 2) Two-year colleges can choose an Accreditor (ACCJC or WSCUC)**
- 3) Single Accreditor for Western Region**
- 4) Relationship with another accreditor (not WSCUC)**

This exercise clarified the issues and additional information needed. Options 2 and 4 were seen as least viable.

External factors to be considered:

- NACIQI/US DoED reaction to ACCJC’s current recognition status (compliance deadline: Oct 10, 2016) or ACCJC’s request for change in scope to accredit more than one baccalaureate
- NACIQI/US DoED reaction to potential WSCUC change in scope to accredit two-year colleges or to institutions ability to choose different accreditors
- Lawsuits being pressed against ACCJC
- Attempts at legislative intrusion into accreditation matters

Universally, we agreed:

- **Change is desired, which will affect both institutions and regional accreditors.**
- **How much work and change institutions and accreditors are willing to undergo is yet to be determined.**
- **More research is required that will help lead to determination of the best option for regional alignment of higher education accreditation in the Western Region and steps for implementation.**
- **It is most encouraging that we are working together toward the unified goal of developing a more meaningful accreditation process that will serve all our institutions and students well into the future.**

Our next meeting is scheduled on October 28.