



**ACCREDITING  
COMMISSION  
for COMMUNITY and  
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association  
of Schools and Colleges*

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**Date: June 15, 2015**

**Memo to: Member Institutions: Chief Executive Officers, Chancellors,  
Accreditation Liaison Officers**

**Copy: Interested Others: Accreditors, Governmental Agencies, and  
Other Organizations**

**From: Krista Johns, Vice President for Policy and Research**

**Subject: Commission Actions on Policy, Policy Committee Activities**

We request that you publicize the information in this memo at your institution. Please note that comment is invited from the field on the first reading policy listed below in section one. A window of time through August 31, 2015 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.

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](http://www.accjc.org).

Changes to existing policies are noted in bold italic font and strikethrough. New policies are all bold italic font.

**1. The following revised institutional policy was approved by the Commission for first reading.**

- **Policy on the Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions**

The substantive revision clarifies when Third Party Comment must be submitted to the ACCJC so that it may be included as part of an external evaluation team's evaluation of an institution. In other cases, the regular process for addressing Third Party Comment is followed. A few additional edits were made for understandability.

Comment Invited

The policy considered for first reading as well as the adopted policies and organizational documents were attached to an 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](http://www.accjc.org) under 'Recent Commission Actions,' 'Actions on Policy.'

*Please note:* The Commission invites comment on the first reading policy through August 31, 2015, 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: [kjohms@accjc.org](mailto:kjohns@accjc.org)
- FAX: 415-506-0238
- Mail: ACCJC, ATTN: Krista Johns, 10 Commercial Blvd. Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949

**2. The following new institutional policy was adopted by the Commission.**

- **Policy on Eligibility to Apply for Accredited Status**

This policy provides information that has been contained in the Eligibility, Candidacy, and Initial Accreditation Manual, for reference by institutions seeking to begin the process for gaining accredited status.

**3. The following revised institutional policies were adopted by the Commission.**

- **Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions**

In accordance with direction from the Commission in June 2014, the Policy Committee undertook revisions to this policy to reflect changes made in accreditation practice during the Review of Accreditation Standards and Practices, and so that definitions related to sanction would align with those of other regional accreditors. New sections include a definitions section and a section on other commission actions. Comments received from the field were considered in making final edits to the policy for second reading.

- **Policy on Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions**

This policy underwent a full review to update references to current accreditation practice and to eliminate sections that were better covered in other policies. Remaining language was edited and reorganized to facilitate readability and clarity.

- **Policy and Procedures for Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems**

The policy has been revised to eliminate procedural material and to simplify the policy statement concerning multi-college district or system reviews. The Policy Committee recommended that the Commission begin a project of identifying procedural guidance for inclusion in a chapter or brief manual for team chairs. The implementation of this project is reported below under Policy Committee Activities.

- **Policy on Closing an Institution**

The primary revision here is to clarify that when voluntary or involuntary withdrawal of accreditation occurs at an institution, or is anticipated to occur, the need for a closure report and substantive change review may be triggered as related to the change in the nature of the constituency served. Other routine clarifications and edits were made.

- **Policy on Substantive Change**

As with the Policy on Closing an Institution, The primary revision clarifies that when voluntary or involuntary withdrawal of accreditation occurs at an institution, or is anticipated to occur, the need for a closure report and substantive change review may be triggered as related to the change in the nature of the constituency served. Other routine clarifications and edits were made to the policy language as well.

**4. The ACCJC Bylaws are presented for information to the public on the recent amendment.**

- **ACCJC Bylaws—Report on Action Taken**

The ACCJC Bylaws were amended in June 2015. A new section was added which pulled together all of the references in the bylaws to Commission actions outside of regularly scheduled meetings. This was done to increase clarity. The Commission also enacted a new elected office, that of Secretary/Treasurer. Other edits were made to update language or clarify meaning.

**5. Policy Committee Activities:**

**Study group to lead consideration of accreditation practice in multi-college districts or systems, including the handling of external evaluation visits.**

In response to the Policy Committee recommendation in January 2015, and to input from the field since that time, a Study Group has been formed to develop recommendations for accreditation practices in multi-college districts or systems, including the handling of external evaluation visits. This Study Group will be led by Dr. Frank Gornick.

**Reorganization of Commission policies.**

The Policy Committee will be beginning a review of institutional policies for the purpose of recommending changes to the organization and structure of the body of Commission policy. The objective of organizational or structural changes will be to simplify policies, reduce redundancy, and to make policy provisions on particular subjects more easily searchable.