Recommendations to ACCJC and its Members
Submitted by
California Community College CEOs, May 2015

*Following discussions among CEOs and presentations by ACCJC (Barbara Beno/Raul Rodriquez) at the 2015 Northern and Southern CEO Conferences, the CEO BOARD reviewed and updated the following recommendations to ACCJC in June 2014. **In general, the CEOs found the 2014 recommendations to still be timely and appropriate (see Items I-III, below).***

Appreciation was expressed for progress made by ACCJC, particularly in terms of extension of the reaffirmation cycle to 7 years, separation of compliance and improvement recommendations, clarification of time for correcting deficiencies, the 2015 Symposium, as well as proposed plans for improved team training and a comprehensive annual conference.

Nevertheless, CEOs found little evidence of progress in many of the areas of recommendation and encourage our Commission to follow through with plans proposed and consider those for which no plans have been offered.

CEOs offer 5 additional overarching recommendations from the 2015 discussions:
1. ***Explore a cohesive structure with WASC Senior College and University Commission** (particularly in light of the community college baccalaureate and the need to strengthen and protect our peer-review system)*
2. ***Improve leadership and staffing of the Commission.***
3. ***Institute regular evaluation of the Commission by its members, using recommendations below as an initial rubric.***
4. ***Increase participation from the field in the selection process for new Commissioners.***
5. ***Plan to expand the accreditation cycle to 10 years by 2020.***

I. **COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH CEOS**
   Effectively engage college and district CEOs as partners in creating a culture in which ACCJC is valued as a member-driven organization.

   A. **Hold annual meeting with CEOs and ACCJC Commission leadership and staff.**
      1. Meet as allies to improve communication, mutual understanding, and information exchange.
      2. Promote improvement of institutions and the Commission as learning organizations.
      3. Work together to mitigate perceptions of the Commission as operating in secret, not listening to needs and concerns of institutions, being unwelcoming and uncaring.

   B. **Respect the leadership role of chancellors in multi-college districts.**
      1. Copy district chancellors on all college CEO and trustee correspondence.
      2. Engage chancellors as organizational CEOs in all facets of the accreditation process.

II. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
   Leverage the vast resources that exist among ACCJC members and allied organizations to strengthen colleges and support accreditation activities.

   A. **Develop a comprehensive plan for professional development for institutional members.**
      1. Develop the plan in collaboration with existing constituency organizations.
      2. Develop a plan that builds capacity, assists in training, and provides technical assistance (e.g., in California, statewide organizations of CEOs, trustees, chief instructional/business/student services/human resources officers, academic and classified senates, CCLC, State Chancellor's Office, Association of Community College Administrators).

   B. **Hold an annual accreditation conference.**
      1. Exchange proven practices, provide team-based workshops for all groups, share accreditation updates.
      2. Convene planning group with representatives of constituent organizations to design and implement conference, referencing other commission conference models (e.g., SACS, HLC).
      3. Link with CCLC Annual Convention for cost savings and member access.

C. **Improve institutional training for accreditation.**
1. Establish taskforce with professionals in constituent groups above for design and implementation of improved training.
2. Develop tool kits and online training modules.
3. Develop a structured *Pathway to Accreditation & Institutional Excellence* guide (like a student learning pathway model) that institutions can use to navigate the new standards and promote institutional engagement. Include features such as examples of good practice, implementation challenges, sample engagement questions, and references.

D. **Improve external evaluation team preparation.**
1. Establish a taskforce with professionals from constituent groups to help with redesign of team training curriculum and delivery. [*Consider the following challenges: inconsistent information; too much time on basics; need more engaging and effective materials and exercises*.]
2. Include the following improvements in training design:
   a. Focus on each standard rather than global overview of all standards.
   b. Case study models of sample self-studies, specific examples of evidence that meet/do not meet standards.
   c. Hybrid, modularized training for teams.
   d. Online competency-based basic training that all new members must pass before team training.
   e. More intensive training, including significant time for members to meet as team with the chair.
3. Strengthen team chair training to emphasize role in shaping positive, focused, nonthreatening visits.
4. Provide training for district chair for multi-college district evaluation teams.
5. Provide college reports as soon as possible to allow for thorough review.

III. **REAFFIRMATION/ACCREDITATION**
Champion and evaluate what matters most: student and organizational learning.

A. **Improve external evaluation team selection.**
1. Establish and publish solid timelines and processes for recruiting and selecting team members.
2. Develop a database of potential team members.
   a. Solicit nominations from all constituency organizations annually.
   b. Increase number of potential CFO team members.
   c. Work with CEOs to validate lists of visiting team members annually.
   d. Include contact information, current college role, areas of expertise, team experience, and other relevant factors (e.g., conflicts of interest).
3. Select and confirm team chairs and members at least six months prior to visits.
4. Notify CEOs (including chancellors) of selections, so campus leave arrangements can be planned well in advance, particularly for faculty members.
5. Prioritize employees of colleges with planned visits to participate on teams 1-2 years ahead of their colleges' visits.

B. **Focus on prevention/advance warning of institutional shortfalls.**
1. Provide clear and diagnostic for colleges at risk of slipping below standards.
2. Integrate use of Early Warning Indicators into training materials and modules for teams.
3. Establish *Technical Assistance Teams* to support colleges with challenges.
4. Work with CEOs to develop collective ways for accreditation recommendations to be more constructive experiences.

C. **Strengthen peer-based, collegial approach to accreditation.**
1. Consider WASC Sr. model for style, tone of college visits – more collaborative, concentrated on specific areas of interest determined in preliminary review and reviewed with institution well in advance of visit.
2. Redesign midterm report with conference prior.

D. **Shift focus to institutional quality and improvement vs. threat of sanction and public disgrace.**
1. Focus more on peer evaluation for quality vs. watchdog for compliance regulation.
2. Shift attention from bureaucratic details and technical deficiencies to serve as champion of student engagement and success.