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THE FUTURE OF ACCREDITATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?

***COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS
SUMMER WORKSHOP***

Portland, Oregon

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***Judith S. Eaton, President
Council for
Higher Education Accreditation***

WILL DISCUSS....

ACCREDITATION AS WE HAVE KNOWN IT

ACCREDITATION TODAY

ACCREDITATION AND THE FUTURE

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

WHAT DO WE DO?

ACCREDITATION AS WE HAVE KNOWN IT

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***CREATED, OWNED AND MANAGED BY HIGHER
EDUCATION***

***PERIODIC REVIEW FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT – INSTITUTIONS, PROGRAMS***

***FOR GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC: “...RELIABLE
AUTHORITY AS TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND
TRAINING...”***

BY THE NUMBERS: +100; 8,300; 26,000; 85

***KEY: PERVASIVE, ACCREDITATION = LEGITIMACY,
FEDERAL RELATIONSHIP AND GATEKEEPING***

HISTORY OF ACCREDITATION...

VALUABLE

SOMETIMES ANNOYING

ABSENCE OF ACCREDITATION A PROBLEM

***PRIMARILY A HIGHER EDUCATION ISSUE: PEER
REVIEW – ACADEMICS JUDGING ACADEMICS***

SINCE THE 1950s: ALSO GOVERNMENT ISSUE

***THE LAST 10 YEARS: THE GROWTH OF GOVERNMENT
JUDGING ACADEMICS***

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TODAY....ACCREDITATION

DOUBTED AND CRITICIZED – “BROKEN”

INCREASING FEDERAL OVERSIGHT [AVALANCHE OF LAW AND REGULATION]

IMMEDIACY OF ACCOUNTABILITY AFFECTING ACCREDITATION

- **SEXUAL ASSAULT [NEW YORK TIMES]**
- **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM [WHEATON (IL) AND GORDON]**
- **FOR-PROFIT [CORINTHIAN]**

PRESSURE: PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND...STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY, COMMON STANDARDS, TRANSPARENCY, RATINGS, ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF ACCREDITATION, INNOVATION

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“...I HAVE RAISED SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT THE ABILITY AND CAPACITY OF OUR ACCREDITATION SYSTEM...AND I’VE IDENTIFIED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST....WE HAVE SEEN TOO MANY INSTANCES OF STUDENTS AND TAXPAYERS SHOULDERING THE BURDEN AND CONSEQUENCES OF POOR OVERSIGHT.”

SENATOR TOM HARKIN, 12/12/13 HELP HEARING

I AM STRUCK BY THE COMMENT THAT ACCREDITATION HAS “...NO MINIMAL STANDARDS FOR OUTCOMES....,” ...IF ACCREDITATION IS A GOOD HOUSEKEEPING SEAL, WE DON’T KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS...”...CONSUMERS ARE NOT GETTING GOOD INFORMATION...THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS “...IS STIFLING INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION....”

CONGRESSWOMAN VIRGINIA FOXX, 6/13/13 SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING

THIS IS WHERE WE ARE NOW...

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

WE NEED TO ADDRESS:

- ***POLITICS OF ACCREDITATION***
- ***CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER
EDUCATION AND IMPACT ON
ACCREDITATION***
- ***PRACTICE OF ACCREDITATION***

POLITICS

REAUTHORIZATION: SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO ACCREDITATION [MARKED BY LARGER FEDERAL ROLE, NON-ACADEMIC QUALITY INDICATORS, KEEP GATEKEEPING AND MANAGE ACCREDITATION]

GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY AND MORE GOVERNMENT REGULATION [FEDERAL REVIEW AND 200 CRITERIA]

DIMINISHED INTEREST IN PEER REVIEW AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION: STATE, COURSE, INNOVATION

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF QUALITY JUDGMENT
[NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS, NON-ACADEMIC INDICATORS]

GOVERNMENT: COLLEGE RATINGS SYSTEM

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LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION: INNOVATION

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***NON-INSTITUTIONAL PROVIDERS: MOOCs,
BADGES, PRIVATE COURSE PROVIDERS***

“JUST-IN-TIME” EDUCATION [TARGET OFFERINGS BASED ON
STUDENT NEEDS: KHAN ACADEMY, LYNDA.COM, GENERAL ASSEMBLY]

***FLEXIBLE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE:
TIME AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
BACCALAUREATE***

[STARTING LATER, ENDING SOONER, STOP-OUT: STANFORD AND SIX YEARS OF ACCESS.
TUFTS AND “STRUCTURED GAP”]

RAISES ISSUES

IS THERE EXTERNAL REVIEW FOR THE QUALITY OF INNOVATION?

ACCREDITATION FOCUSES ON TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS, PROGRAMS AND DEGREES

SHOULD ACCREDITATION EXPAND TO EMBRACE THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE?

IS ACCREDITATION A “BARRIER TO INNOVATION”?

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IDEAS FOR PRACTICE OF ACCREDITATION

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REGIONAL ACCREDITATION:

- ***CONTINUED NEED?***
- ***CONSISTENT STANDARDS***
- ***COMMON LANGUAGE***

TIERED ACCREDITATION STATUS

DIFFERENTIATED REVIEWS

SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR BAD ACTORS

VARY STUDENT AID BASED ON ACCREDITED STATUS

FOCUS ON OUTCOMES

MORE TRANSPARENCY

WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON YOU?

ACCREDITATION VISITS MORE REGULATORY IN NATURE

ACCREDITATION MORE PRESCRIPTIVE [CREDIT HOUR, STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES]

MORE REQUIRED DATA AND REPORTING [FEDERAL OBLIGATIONS]

INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION MORE LIKE PROGRAMMATIC ACCREDITATION?

- ***STANDARDS LESS ASPIRATIONAL?***
- ***MORE “BRIGHT LINES”: GRADUATION RATES, TRANSFER, RETENTION?***

TEAM REPORTS, ACTION LETTERS, SELF-STUDIES PUBLIC

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CURRENT FEDERAL OBLIGATIONS – AN EXAMPLE

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- 1. Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition***
- 2. Institutional Records of Student Complaints***
- 3. Publication of Transfer Policies***
- 4. Practices for Verification of Student Identity***
- 5. Title IV Program Responsibilities***
 - General Program Responsibilities***
 - Financial Responsibility Requirements***
 - Default Rates***
 - Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, Related Disclosures***
 - Student Right to Know***
 - Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies***
 - Contractual Relationships***
 - Consortial Relationships***

CURRENT FEDERAL OBLIGATIONS – AN EXAMPLE - 2

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- 6. Required Information for Students and the Public***
- 7. Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information***
- 8. Review of Student Outcome Data***
- 9. Standing with State and other Accrediting Agencies***
- 10. Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment***
- 11. Information on Contractual and Consortial Arrangements***

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO YOU?

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BECAUSE OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF WHAT COUNTS AS QUALITY

- **ACCREDITATION HAS STOOD FOR QUALITY DEFINED IN ACADEMIC TERMS: FACULTY, CURRICULUM RESEARCH. QUALITY IS NOW BEING DEFINED IN NON-ACADEMIC TERMS: ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY, DEBT AND DEFAULT**

BECAUSE OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF WHO DECIDES QUALITY

- **ACCREDITATION HAS STOOD FOR ACADEMICS DECIDING QUALITY. QUALITY IS NOW BEING DECIDED BY GOVERNMENT, THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC**

BECAUSE OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ROLE OF MONEY IN JUDGING QUALITY

- **ACCREDITATION HAS STOOD FOR RESPECTING FISCAL RESOURCES BUT NOT BEING DEFINED BY THEM. QUALITY IS NOW JUDGED IN PART BY EARNINGS, RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

ARE THESE TRANSFORMATIONS WHAT YOU WANT ACCREDITATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION TO BE AND DO IN THE FUTURE?

WHAT DO WE DO?

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THREE OPTIONS:

- ***NOTHING: BELIEF THAT THIS WILL NOT AFFECT YOU***
- ***TOLERATE MORE DEMANDING AND PRESCRIPTIVE ACCREDITATION VISITS AND REQUIREMENTS***
- ***ENGAGE: AVOID THE LIKELY FUTURE FOR ACCREDITATION***
 - ***STAND FOR THE ESSENTIALS THAT WE VALUE THAT ARE INHERENT IN ACCREDITATION***

...DOING NOTHING AND TOLERATING THE SITUATION ARE LESS DESIRABLE THAN ENGAGING...

ENGAGING QUALITY ESSENTIALS - HIGHER EDUCATION AND ACCREDITATION

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***PEER REVIEW – CENTRAL TO DEFINING “QUALITY” IN
HIGHER EDUCATION***

***INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY – BOTH THE DRIVER AND
FOUNDATION FOR ROBUST ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP***

***COMMITMENT TO MISSION – HAS PRODUCED THE
VALUABLE AND DESIRED DIVERSITY OF HIGHER
EDUCATION***

***ACADEMIC FREEDOM – AN IMPERATIVE FOR HIGH-
QUALITY TEACHING AND RESEARCH. WITHOUT IT, NO
“WORLD CLASS” COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES***

ENGAGING MEANS...

**MAKE THE CASE FOR THESE ESSENTIALS – ON CAMPUS,
IN CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES, EVERYWHERE**

**CHANGE THE NARRATIVE: WHY ACCREDITATION IS
EFFECTIVE, NOT BROKEN**

**FIGHT FOR REGULATION REDUCTION FOR ACCREDITATION
– IT’S REGULATORY REDUCTION FOR YOU**

**REMEMBER THAT FEDERAL LAW SAYS THAT
ACCREDITATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR: “...SUCCESS WITH RESPECT
TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN RELATION TO THE INSTITUTION’S MISSION, WHICH MAY
INCLUDE DIFFERENT STANDARDS FOR DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS, AS
ESTABLISHED BY THE INSTITUTION....” [NOT STANDARDIZATION, REGULATORY
SAMENESS]**

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ENGAGING MEANS...

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MAKING THE CASE:

- ***ACCREDITATION'S PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IS EDUCATIONAL QUALITY***
 - ***STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT***
 - ***INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE***
- ***ACCREDITATION'S ROLE:***
 - ***HELPING STUDENTS TO LEARN***
 - ***IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL QUALITY***
 - ***PROMOTING QUALITY INNOVATION***

BOTTOM LINE

THE CHANGES TO ACCREDITATION ARE CHANGING THE ROLE AND POSITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS VIS-À-VIS STUDENTS, GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC

OVER TIME, THE DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES WILL MOVE TOWARD:

- **A REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT AT THE PRICE OF AN ENVIRONMENT OF PEER REVIEW AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**
- **NON-ACADEMIC INDICATORS REPLACING ACADEMIC INDICATORS OF QUALITY**
- **STANDARDIZATION AT THE PRICE OF DIVERSITY OF MISSION**
- **DIMINISHED ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THUS INTELLECTUAL CREATIVITY**

...UNLESS WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT ACCREDITATION...

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***ACCREDITATION IS ABOUT
MUCH MORE THAN
ACCREDITATION***

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THANK YOU

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