

WASC Update – March 2009

The following is a report on recent actions and upcoming events of the Commission. We welcome your inquiries and comments about them. We also look forward to seeing many of you at the forthcoming Academic Resource Conference in Hollywood.

Recent Commission Actions

At its meeting Feb. 18-20, the Commission took action on 32 institutions and approved over 50 substantive and structural changes.

We are pleased to welcome the Academy for Jewish Religion and Providence Christian College, both of which were granted Candidacy. We also congratulate Bethany University, Claremont School of Theology, John F. Kennedy University, Menlo College, and United States International University, Africa on the reaffirmation of their accreditation

For a copy of the [full list of actions](#), please see the “[President's Corner](#)” section of the commission website.

2009-10 Dues

In light of the uncertainty created by the recent economic downturn, the Commission set aside its anticipated dues increase and decided at its February meeting to keep dues flat for 2009-10. To address the reduction in revenue, the Commission is projecting a salary freeze for 2009-10 and will take other measures. The [Dues and Fees Schedule for 2009-10](#) can be found in the Document Library on the Commission website. Billing for 2009-10 annual dues will begin soon.

CEO Events at the Academic Resource Conference

We are pleased to be offering a wide variety of conference sessions for CEOs at the upcoming ARC. These include:

- **Fund Development for Trustees and Presidents of ACSCU/WASC Institutions.** (CEO/Board Chair Roundtable, Wednesday, 4/15)
- **“Bologna is Coming – So What Does It Mean for Your Institution?”** Keynote address by Clifford Adelman, Senior Associate, Institute for Higher Education Policy. (CEO Reception and Dinner, Wednesday, 4/15):
- **The Higher Education Act and looming issues in higher education under the new administration.** (CEO Breakfast and Forum, Thursday, 4/16):
- **“Economic Hard Times in the Academy -- Observations on How Bad It Has Become, How Rough It May Get, and How Institutions Can Prudently and Thoughtfully Plan for Continued Financial Turbulence.”** Keynote address by Larry White, President, Lawrence White Consulting. (Luncheon Plenary, Thursday, 4/16)
- **Sustaining the Focus on Student Learning in the Face of Economic Challenges: a Presidential Panel Discussion.** Presenters: Mark Yudof (UC President), Charles Reed (CSU Chancellor), Maria Klawe (President, Harvey Mudd College). Moderated by Peter Ewell (NCHEMS). (Friday, 4/17)

- **No Ordinary Foreign Travel: Epiphanies on Accountability and Access from the Bologna Process.** Clifford Adelman, Senior Associate, Institute for Higher Education Policy (Friday, 4/17)

Descriptions of these sessions may be viewed at: [ARC Highlights – CEOs](#). For full program and conference registration information, see [WASC ARC](#).

ALO Meeting at the Academic Resource Conference

A reminder to all ALOs – The annual [ALO Workshop](#) will take place on Wednesday, April 15, prior to the start of the ARC.

This day-long workshop is an opportunity for focused conversations with staff and peers on the key issues that affect the work of the Accreditation Liaison Officer. Staff will share updates on changes in policies, Standards, and the Institutional Review Process, and report on the latest news regarding federal and state higher education policy. In addition, three task forces - on accountability/ transparency, program review, and student success - will present their recommendations for working with the revised Standards and Criteria for Review. The workshop includes a working lunch and is followed by an evening reception. New ALOs are advised also to attend the pre-workshop breakfast and orientation.

[Registration](#) may be completed online on the WASC ARC website. Please note that pre-registration for this event is strongly advised.

Key Issues for the Future – A WASC Discussion Paper

At its meetings in November 2008 and February 2009, the Commission focused on major issues and trends facing higher education and accreditation. Four topics were discussed: globalization, the governance of accreditation, student learning outcomes, and new learning environments. Our purpose was to enhance our understanding of these major issues and to identify the implications of trends in these areas for our institutions and the work of WASC over the next several years.

The Commission and staff have also engaged in discussions about the impact of the economic recession on our institutions and students. Our meetings in January with presidents and trustees from 40 institutions, and many other conversations with institutional leaders lead us to understand that there is great uncertainty about the full impact of the downturn in the economy, that each institution will be affected differently, and that the greatest impact is likely to be felt over the next two years. The Commission is exploring how best to address the downturn and its implications for accreditation.

These Commission discussions have led to a [Discussion Paper](#), which the Commission is circulating for comment and discussion throughout the region. To this end, we will host a series of conversations throughout the region over the coming months, starting with the CEO Forum (April 16), the ALO workshop (April 15), and the CAO Forum (April 17), all held at our annual Academic Resource Conference at the Renaissance Hotel in Hollywood. We invite you to share your thoughts about these ideas and the attached discussion paper.

Commission election reminder

Ballots for the 2009 Commission Election were sent recently to all CEOs of WASC-accredited institutions. If you have not submitted your ballot to us, please do so by Monday, April 6. Election results will be

announced, and new commissioners will be introduced, during the CEO Breakfast and Forum at the Academic Resource Conference. Detailed information about the WASC election process, and copies of the election ballot, may be obtained at: [Commission Election](#).

Update on the Higher Education Opportunity Act

The Department of Education is now engaged in developing regulations to implement the many new provisions of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). As part of this process, the Department is required to enter into "negotiated rulemaking," and five rulemaking panels have been established. One of these panels deals exclusively with accreditation-related matters, and Ralph Wolff, President and Executive Director, has been appointed as the primary negotiator to represent regional accreditors, along with Belle Wheelan, President of the Southern Association (SACS). Sixteen issues have been identified for negotiation. The panel met in early March and will meet again in April and May. While some of the issues identified will not affect WASC-accredited institutions, others will. Included in the topics under review are modifications to procedures affecting distance education, substantive change, monitoring growth of institutions, transfer of credit confidentiality, and changes to appeals procedures. We are working hard to minimize any additional burden on accreditors and our institutions from these new regulations. The first draft of proposed new regulations will become available shortly before the Academic Resource Conference (ARC) and will be discussed at the ALO meeting and the CEO Forum.