

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



Western Association of Schools and Colleges

May 2010

We are pleased to provide a report on recent actions of the Commission and an update on Commission activities. We are also using this edition of the Update to highlight a number of issues that the Commission is working on this spring - including the start of a review of the Handbook of Accreditation. I will look forward to interacting with many of you as we move forward in this process. If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me at rwolff@wascsenior.org.

In This Issue

Commission Actions - Winter 2010

2010-11 Dues and Revised Fees

Under Secretary Kanter at the WASC CEO Forum and ARC

Assessing the Impact of the Financial Recession

Implementation of AB48 and State Authorization

Update on Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC)

For Profit Institutions

New Procedures for Initial Accreditation of non-WASC Accredited Institutions

Appointments to NACIQI

Election of New Commissioners

Handbook Revision

Commission Actions - Winter 2010

At it's meeting February 17-19 2010, the Accrediting Commission took action on 29 institutions and approved 13 substantive and structural changes.

We congratulate American Conservatory Theater; Art Center College of Design; Franciscan School of Theology; Sonoma State University; The American Film Institute; University of California, Riverside; University of California, San Diego; University of San Francisco; Western University of Health Sciences; and William Jessup University on the reaffirmation of their accreditation.

A [full list of the commission's actions](#) may be viewed on the WASC website.

2010-11 Dues and Revised Fees

Public Session of the WASC Commission Meeting June 18, 2010 San Jose, CA

Institutional representatives and members of the public are invited to attend a Public Session of the Accrediting Commission's upcoming meeting. This session will be held on:

**Fri., June 18, 2010
10:45 am - 12:15 pm
Sainte Claire Hotel
302 South Market St.
San Jose, CA.**

The session will include reports from the Policy and Planning Committee, the Finance and Operations Committee, and the President and Executive Director.

If you wish to attend the Public Session, please RSVP by June 11, 2010 to Amy Allington, Commission Support Manager (aallington@wascsenior.org). Please include your name, title, and institution in your response.

We look forward to seeing you!

WASC Educational Seminars 2010-11

In the past three years, over 1200 individuals representing 400 institutions have found WASC's educational seminars to be a great way to build human capital and maintain momentum for institutional effectiveness.

Also at its February 2010 meeting, the Commission ratified its dues and fee schedules for the 2010-11 academic year.

In acknowledgement of the continuing economic uncertainties facing many of our institutions, the commission agreed to a 0% dues increase for the second year in a row. Dues invoices are being prepared and will be mailed to institutions by June 15.

With the expectation that institutions of 50,000 or more students may be seeking WASC accreditation in the future, the Commission also extended the FTE dues categories (grouped by 5,000 FTE) from 25,000 through 50,000 FTE and beyond. The new categories will apply immediately to any new WASC institution and will be applied only in the 2011-12 year for institutions already accredited by WASC.

The Commission also analyzed processes and related fees for Initial Accreditation, Change of Ownership/Mergers, and Candidacy, to evaluate whether existing fee structures were appropriate to the level of work and time that these processes required. Based on an analysis of time and work involved, the Commission significantly increased the fees for these types of applications so that the costs of processing them would be borne by the institutions seeking WASC action.

In addition, the Commission adopted a new site/additional location maintenance fee which will be applied to all locations of an institution beyond the first, in order to maintain updated information throughout the year, as required by the US Department of Education. There also was a modification in the site visit fees for team visits to off-campus or additional locations.

A [copy of the 2010-11 Dues and Fees Schedule](#) is available in the Document Library on the WASC website.

In the upcoming year, WASC will be offering seminars on:

Student Learning and Assessment, Level I

Sept. 23-24, 2010,
Southern California

Student Learning and Assessment, Level II

Oct. 21-23, 2010, Southern
California

Program Review Workshop

Nov. 11-12, 2010,
Honolulu, HI

President-Trustee Leadership Retreat

Dec. 8 and 9,
2010, Northern and
Southern California

Under Secretary Kanter at the WASC CEO Forum and Academic Resource Conference

[See the WASC website for more details!](#)

Martha Kanter, Under Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education, addressed over 100 community college and university presidents at the 2010 CEO Forum, and then gave the opening keynote address at our annual Academic Resource Conference. We also were pleased that Dr. Eduardo Ochoa, provost of Sonoma State University and recently confirmed Under Secretary of Education for Postsecondary Education was able to attend the CEO Forum and the ARC.

Dr. Kanter emphasized in both settings her appreciation for accreditation, indicating, "I have been an ALO" and "worked on self studies and served on teams." With respect to the role of accreditation, she indicated that we are in an era of increased accountability and that accreditation will need to provide greater transparency regarding its actions, and work with institutions to improve both graduation rates and the quality of learning. She emphasized the importance of President Obama's American Graduation Initiative, deigned to increase the percentage of Americans with a postsecondary degree from 40% to 60% by 2020. This will take enormous commitment and innovation, she stressed. She also described her efforts to listen to the needs of the higher education community and reflected on the impact of a number of initiatives undertaken as a result of stimulus funding dedicated to higher education, and savings arising from the passage of direct lending (which she also acknowledged was not nearly as much as the Administration had hoped for).

In the question and answer session, Dr. Kanter was asked about the tension between federal regulation and institutional autonomy. She acknowledged the tension and noted that the Department is concerned about improving access, completion rates and student preparation for college-level work as key priorities. She urged institutions to work with WASC on these issues.

Assessing the Impact of the Financial Recession

Last fall, the Commission undertook a survey of institutions to determine the impact of the recession on higher education in our region. A full report of the survey is available in the [President's Corner](#) section of the WASC website.

The Commission continues to monitor the effect of the recession. It has requested that all site visit teams explore the impact of the recession on the campuses that they visit and report if there are any issues that need to be addressed as a result. In Commission interviews with presidents during institutional reviews, questions also are asked about the impact of the recession. It is notable that, at least for the 2009-10 year, institutions have been able to successfully navigate the many consequences of the recession. Less clear is what the impact of the recession will be in 2010-11, and the Commission will continue to maintain communication with institutions on this issue.

In recognition of the fact that institutional budget cuts often reduced or eliminated assessment activities during previous recessions, the Commission also has determined that the progress made by institutions in assessing student learning and improving the program review process should be continued. The external accountability environment is significantly greater today than ever before, and assessment of student learning and improvement of graduation rates are central to addressing accountability concerns about both higher education and accreditation. Too much progress has been made to defer or delay the commitment to these issues, and they will continue to be primary focal points for evaluation teams and the Commission.

Implementation of AB48 and State Authorization

The new law reviving the Bureau of Private Postsecondary and Secondary Education will go officially into effect July 1, 2010. Under the statute, WASC accredited institutions are exempt from the law and WASC staff will be meeting with the Bureau to ensure effective implementation of the exemption. If institutions need confirmation of their accreditation, please let your staff liaison know.

It is also important to note that the US Department of Education attempted to adopt a new regulation calling into question the legitimacy of the WASC exemption. Through the negotiated rulemaking process, we were able to promote a number of changes that we thought would allow the law to stand, though it would likely require modifications to the licensing provisions for higher education institutions in Hawaii. The rulemaking process concluded without consensus, so the Department is now readying new regulations to be released in June. While much of the attention will be on gainful employment, there may be an effort to regulate a consistent approach to state authorization in the licensing of degree granting institutions, and monitoring of institutions even if accredited. We will be monitoring this issue closely.

Update on Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC)

President/Executive Director Wolff meets regularly with the executives of the other regional accrediting commissions as part of C-RAC, through bi-weekly conference calls and quarterly meetings to discuss policy issues and common practices. In February, as vice chair of C-RAC, he coordinated a retreat of the executives and three commissioners from each region, which included a set of readings about issues affecting accreditation and a facilitated dialogue over two days. (Links to the readings are available on

the [WASC website](#).)

There was considerable agreement over the issues facing accreditation - acknowledging and addressing the increasing calls for accountability, and providing greater information about accreditation and our actions. At the same time, the commissioners identified a need for regional accreditation to more clearly identify its role and value in relation to other forms of accountability and accreditation, and promote case studies where accreditation has had a positive impact at a range of institutions.

The priorities set at the February retreat were further discussed in a meeting of the C-RAC executives May 18-20, which included meetings with Dr. Martha Kanter, Bob Shireman and others in the US Department of Education, President Molly Broad and Terry Hartle from ACE, President Judith Eaton from CHEA, and others to discuss the issues that accreditors need to address. C-RAC agreed to work together with ACE on these issues, and to study collectively ways to develop a more effective response from regional accreditors on how we are working to address the issues of student learning, completion, and transparency.

For Profit Institutions

Many of you may have seen the *Frontline* show on PBS dealing with the growth of for-profit institutions. While a national issue, two WASC institutions were highlighted in the show. In addition, officials in the US Department of Education (USDE) have spoken out about quality concerns in the for-profit sector, and criticized the ability of accreditors, especially regional accreditation, to address these institutions. This issue was discussed within C-RAC and there will be a study of how each regional association addresses for-profit institutions, especially their acquisitions of nonprofit institutions. Within WASC, we will be developing additional guidelines for reviewing for-profit institutions to ensure that we are asking the right questions for the governance, organizational and financial models they present. At the current time, WASC accredits five for-profit institutions, and is working with a sixth, which is accredited in another region and is in the process of moving its headquarters into the WASC region.

As indicated above, new regulations affecting gainful employment and other issues will be published soon and circulated for comment by the US Department of Education. They will affect for-profit institutions primarily, but some will also affect nonprofit institutions. We will monitor the new draft regulations when they are published and send out our views on them.

New Procedures for Initial Accreditation of non-WASC Accredited Institutions

In the past several years, we have received several applications from regionally accredited institutions from outside the WASC region which wish to move into the WASC region and become accredited by WASC. There also have been a number of nationally accredited institutions operating in California which have expressed their desire to become WASC accredited. And there are a small number of institutions accredited by our sister WASC commission for community colleges - ACCJC - that will move to the jurisdiction of the Senior College Commission by offering multiple bachelors degrees. To address these situations, meet requirements of the USDE, and ensure that these institutions meet fully meet WASC standards, a new policy has been adopted on Initial Accreditation of Institutions Currently Accredited by a USDOE-Recognized Agency. This new policy can be viewed in the [WASC Policies Manual](#), available in the Document Library of the WASC website.

Appointments to NACIQI

The 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act revised the structure and operating procedures of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI). This advisory committee is responsible to review the recognition petitions of all USDE recognized accrediting agencies, including all three WASC commissions, and to recommend to the Secretary of Education actions on these petitions. We are pleased that Chancellor Emeritus Larry Vanderhoef of UC Davis and an outgoing member of the WASC commission, has been appointed to NACIQI. As well, a number of other appointees are from the WASC region, including a student from Occidental College, the new Dean of the Hastings College of Law, and others who have chaired WASC teams. A full list of appointees is available on the CHEA website at: http://www.chea.org/Government/FedUpdate/CHEA_FU10.html.

Election of New Commissioners

WASC is pleased to welcome **Barbara Karlin**, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Golden Gate University; **Margaret Kasimatis**, Vice President for Academic Planning & Effectiveness at Loyola Marymount University; **Stephen Privett**, President of University of San Francisco; **Sharon Salinger**, Dean of Undergraduate Education at UC Irvine; **Ramon Torrecilha**, Executive Vice President at Mills College; and **Timothy White**, Chancellor of UC Riverside, as the newest members of the Accrediting Commission. They will begin their three year terms of service on the Commission, effective July 1, 2010.

We would also like to extend our most heartfelt appreciation to six commissioners, who will be retiring from service on the WASC Commission at the end of June. These include **Sherwood Lingenfelter**, Provost and Senior Vice President at Fuller Theological Seminary, and outgoing Chair of the Commission; **Jerry Campbell**, President of Claremont School of Theology; **Aimee Dorr**, Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA; **John Eshelman**, Provost emeritus at Seattle University; **Eleanor Siebert**, Provost and Academic Vice President at Mount St. Mary's College; and **Larry Vanderhoef**, Chancellor emeritus at UC Davis.

Handbook Revision - Lumina Foundation for Education Grant

We will undertake a review of the standards, policies and visit process of the 2001 Handbook (revised in 2008) over the coming 18 months. To launch this process, WASC received a small meeting grant to discuss a strategic plan for the process, and a meeting was held April 21-22. Participants included 8 commissioners, and a number of resource people to help the commission frame where we are and how WASC needs to position itself for the expected life of the next Handbook - from 2012 to 2020. The full Commission will discuss the results and priorities emerging from the meeting at its public session on June 18th in San Jose.

A number of key areas were identified for continued exploration within the region:

1. the development of a WASC values and purpose statement that draws on the values of innovation, rigor and adaptiveness that framed the 2001 Handbook;
2. further work to address and improve retention and graduation rates throughout the region;
3. deepening institutional engagement on the improvement of student learning outcomes, and developing ways to evaluate and publicly report learning results;
4. initiating dialogue on the meaning and framework of degrees to move beyond simple credit hour accumulation;
5. developing ways to support innovation, especially to address new institutional forms and pathways that students might take;
6. and increasing public reporting and transparency about the

accrediting process.

It was also agreed that there would be a need to review the three-stage visit process and potentially, to develop additional visit models to address the different stages of institutional development within the region.

The Commission will discuss a plan for moving forward with the Handbook revision at its June 16-18 meeting, including the appointment of a Steering Committee and the creation of a number of task groups to review these, and other issues. A designated Handbook Revision page will also be created on the WASC website, where documents and announcements related to the process will be posted.

[Forward email](#)

SafeUnsubscribe®

This email was sent to wascsr@wascsenior.org by rwolff@wascsenior.org.
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Western Association of Schools and Colleges | 985 Atlantic Avenue | Suite 100 | Alameda | CA | 94501