INTRODUCTION TO ACCREDITATION

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OVERVIEW

• Describe the purpose and benefits of accreditation

• Differentiate between regional accreditors, national accreditors and specialized accreditors

• Identify the regional accreditors located in the United States

• Discuss accreditations relationship with the US Secretary of Education
• Describe and compare the accreditation process used by the regional accrediting organizations

• Discuss the use of peer evaluators in the accreditation process

• Compare and contrast the various accreditation reviews performed
Accreditation is a process used by colleges, universities and other institutions of higher education to sustain and strengthen their quality. To earn and maintain accreditation, colleges and universities must demonstrate to colleagues from peer institutions that they meet or exceed mutually agreed upon standards

>> Quality Assurance

>> Quality Improvement
BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION

• Primary public symbol of legitimate higher education for over 100 years
• Primary ‘reliable authority’ for federal and state government funding for higher education
• Primary ‘reliable authority’ for private sector financial support
• Major source of protection against fraud and abuse for students and consumers
• Successful in encouraging major innovation while maintaining quality over the years.

Source: CHEA (Council for Higher Education Accreditation), June 2013
BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION

• Cost-efficient in the use of resources to achieve its goals
• Central to states carrying out licensure of the professions
• Essential to international mobility
• Responsive to current climate of accountability
• Vital to maintaining key features of higher education that have contributed to the enterprise as among the best in the world

Source: CHEA (Council for Higher Education Accreditation), June 2013
CURRENT CHALLENGES

- The Expanding Role of Government: From Partnership to Oversight
- Public Accountability: Calls for Evidence of Student Achievement and Transparency
- Accreditation & Innovation: Expectation of Fresh Approaches to Education & Training
- New Judges of Academic Quality: Multiple Sources to Answer – Is it Quality?
- Internationalization and Accreditation: How to Assure Quality as Institutions Increasingly Internationalize.
NEGOTIATED RULE MAKING

• Recent activity proceedings during 2019
FUNDING ACCREDITATION

• Provided by:
  – Annual dues from member institutions
  – Fees from institutions for accreditation visits
  – Programming fees (conferences / workshops)
  – Sponsoring organization's
TYPES OF ACCREDITATION

• Regional

• National (Career or Faith Related)

• Specialized / Programmatic
REGIONAL ACCREDITATION

• Granted by one of the seven accrediting agencies approved by the US Department of Education
• Applies to the institution as a whole and not individual programs / units
• Institutions are engaged in continuous improvement and self reflection and encourage educational effectiveness
• Uses a peer evaluation process to examine activities within the institution
NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

• Not bound by geographic lines
• Institutions with a single purpose in nature or clear thematic mission
• Entire institution is accredited rather than individual programs / units
• Examples:
  – Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE)
SPECIALIZED / PROGRAMMATIC ACCREDITATION

• Accredit individual educational programs
• Has distinctive definition of eligibility, criteria and operating procedures
• Programs may reside within comprehensive institution or within single–purpose institutions
• Examples:
  – National Association of Art & Design (NASAD)
  – Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)
COMMONALITIES OF THE ACCREDITING AGENCIES

- Private, NFP Membership Organizations
- Developed specific standards, policies and processes
- Staff is augmented by academic volunteers
- Award accreditation status for specified time period
- Major decision making body (commission / board)
  - Establishment of accreditor's standards, policies and practices
  - Conduct accreditation reviews and determination of status for institutions and programs
  - Management and governance of the organization itself
WHO ACCREDITS THE ACCREDITORS

• Council for Higher Education Authority (CHEA)
• National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI)

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Review process similar to what institutions go through during the accreditation activities process
REGIONAL ACCREDITORS

• Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

• The Higher Learning Commission – North Central (HLC)

• New England Association – Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NEASC)

• Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

• Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges (SACS)

• Western Association of Schools and Colleges – Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges (WASC - Senior)

• Western Association of Schools and Colleges – Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (AACCJC)
REGIONAL ACCREDITORS - MSCHE

Mission

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education assures students and the public of the educational quality of higher education. The Commission's accreditation process ensures institutional accountability, self-appraisal, improvement, and innovation through peer review and the rigorous application of standards within the context of institutional mission.

Source: MSCHE Website: www.msche.org
REGиональный аккредитор: MSCHE

Географические местоположения:
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Maryland
- New Jersey
- New York
- Pennsylvania
- US Virgin Islands
- Various International Sites
REGIONAL ACCREDITOR: HLC

Geographic Locations:
• Arkansas
• Arizona
• Colorado
• Iowa
• Illinois
• Indiana
• Kansas
• Michigan
• Minnesota

• Missouri
• North Dakota
• Nebraska
• Ohio
• Oklahoma
• New Mexico
• South Dakota
• Wisconsin
• West Virginia
• Wyoming
REGIONAL ACCREDITOR: NEASC

Geographic Locations:
• Connecticut
• Maine
• Massachusetts
• New Hampshire
• Rhode Island
• Vermont
• Various International Sites
REGIONAL ACCREDITOR: NWCCU

Geographic Locations:
• Alaska
• Idaho
• Montana
• Nevada
• Oregon
• Utah
• Washington
REGIONAL ACCREDITOR - SACS

Geographic Locations:
- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia
- Various International Sites
REGIONAL ACCREDITOR: WASC

Geographic Location:
- California
- Hawaii
- Guam
- Pacific Basin
RELATIONSHIP W/ US SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

- Eligibility for federal funds such as financial assistance programs administered by the US Department of Education under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (amended)

- “Gatekeeper”
  - Distance and Correspondence Education (Student login)
  - Transfer of Credit (and Articulation Agreements)
  - Cohort Default Rate
  - Assignment of Credit Hours
PRELIMINARY REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION

- Conditional of Eligibility Requirements
- Agreements with Affiliation
ACCREDITATION PROCESS USED BY REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

• Institutions prepare reports documenting evidence of compliance with standards set forth by the accrediting agency
• Peer evaluators review material, and may conduct a visit to evaluate information provided in the report
• Recommendation for accreditation / re-affirmation is made to a committee
• Recommendations are further made to the full Commission Board for approval or refinement.
• Final Affirmation, w/ comments is approved by the Commission Board.
ACCREDITATION OPERATIONS

Standards

Self Studies

Peer Review

Judgment on Accreditation status

Periodic Review
STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

• Mission and Goals
• Ethics and Integrity
• Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
• Support of the Student Experience
• Educational Effectiveness Assessment
• Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement
• Governance, Leadership, and Administration
STANDARDS BY ACCREDITORS (CRITERION)

- 1: Mission
- 2: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
- 3: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources & Support
- 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
- 5: Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
All accrediting entities use some form of ‘peer evaluator’

Institutional volunteers share their knowledge and experience with others on the team and with the institution undergoing a review process.

These evaluators are trained in the areas of ‘characteristics / core competencies’ related to their accrediting agency.
TYPES OF ACCREDITATION REVIEWS

• Candidate Status (Applicants for Accreditation)

• Self-study Evaluation

• Periodic Review

• Substantive Change

• Follow-up / Monitoring
ACCREDITATION DECISIONS

- Reaffirm accreditation
- Reaffirm w/ report requirement(s)
- To warn the institution its accreditation may be in jeopardy and request additional report(s)
- To postpone a decision and request supplemental reports
- To notify the institution it is on probation
- To notify the institution it must show cause regarding accreditation status
- To remove accreditation
ACCREDITOR WEBSITES

• Middle States Commission on Higher Education
  – www.msche.org
• Higher Learning Commission
  – www.ncahlc.org
• New England Association – Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
  – www.neasc.org

• Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
  – www.nwccu.org
• Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
  – www.sacs.org
• Western Association of Schools and Colleges
  – www.wascsenior.org
ADDITIONAL WEBSITE RESOURCES

• CHEA
  – Council for Higher Education Accreditation
    • www.chea.org

• NACIQI
  – National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity
    • http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/naciqi.html

• US Department of Education – Accreditation
  • http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html
QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

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