

# **COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITATION**

## **2007 CHEA AGENDA REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT**

*The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) will work with the Congress on reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 2007 based on goals grounded in a call for leadership from institutions, programs and accrediting organizations in setting direction for academic quality as vital to effective accreditation and accountability.*

### **REAUTHORIZATION GOALS**

#### ***Student Learning Outcomes***

CHEA supports additional attention to student learning outcomes as central to judgments about academic quality, provided that institutions and programs, working with accrediting organizations, determine these outcomes.

#### ***Institutional and Program Performance***

CHEA supports the collection, compilation and publication of evidence of institution and program performance, provided that institutions and programs, working with accrediting organizations, determine this evidence based on institution and program mission.

#### ***Transparency***

CHEA supports providing additional information to the public about the quality of institutions and programs that is both readily accessible and easily understandable, provided that this information is developed by institutions and programs, working with accrediting organizations.

#### ***Transfer of Credit***

CHEA supports efforts to strengthen transfer of credit to meet student access and mobility needs and reaffirms its policy position that relying solely on accredited status when determining whether to consider transfer requests is undesirable.

#### ***Distance Learning***

CHEA supports the use of a single set of accreditation standards for both site-based and distance education, at the same time calling for additional scrutiny of distance learning programs and institutions when they are newly eligible for Title IV (Student Assistance) funds.

#### ***Other Goals***

A number of other issues were raised during the 2003-2006 reauthorization efforts. These include: due process in accreditation, how to address various religious missions, whether states serve as recognized accreditors and the relationship between accreditation and any "college consumer profile" that may be proposed by Congress or the Department of Education. CHEA will respond as needed in these areas and, where policy positions are required, consult with the CHEA Board of Directors.

## **KEY ASSUMPTIONS GUIDING REAUTHORIZATION EFFORTS**

Five fundamental assumptions about the importance and value of accreditation guide CHEA's work on reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 2007. CHEA calls on the Congress and the Executive Branch to affirm that:

1. Accreditation provides value to students and society by routinely assuring academic quality and working to improve higher education.
2. Accreditation has primary responsibility for judgments about academic quality in higher education.
3. Accreditation is responsive to significant changes in higher education and its role in society such as distance learning and the internationalization of higher education.
4. Accreditation's national, decentralized, mission-based structure and approach to higher education quality provides effective service to the public.
5. Accreditation serves society well as a private, self-regulatory activity, not a state actor or arm of the government.

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*A national advocate and institutional voice for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation, CHEA is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes 60 institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations.*



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