AAUP-CHEA Advisory Statement on Accreditation & Academic Freedom (Oct ’12)

“The success of American higher education, including the high regard in which it is held worldwide, is explained in good measure by the observance of academic freedom. This freedom is manifested institutionally as colleges and universities seek to conduct their educational missions without inappropriate influence from external centers of power—public and private. It is manifested professionally as faculty seek to test and disseminate knowledge, to instill independence of mind and to engage in debate over institutional and public policies.”
RQ restatement of AAUP-CHEA:

The [quality] of American higher education ...is explained in good measure by the observance of [core university values,] including:

- **institutional autonomy** from public and private powers
- **academic freedom** in research, publication, teaching and **learning** also (aka student academic rights/freedom)
- **accountability**, including shared governance & transparency
- **social responsibility**, including engaging in debate on “public policies”; *raises issue of on-campus vs. off-campus action*

& (missing from text, but presumptively intended is):
- **equitable access** to higher ed on merit (anti-discrimination principle; *but what about cost barriers to higher ed?*)
AAUP-CHEA questions:

• To what extent are accrediting organizations alert to the importance of [university values]?

• To what extent do [accreditation] standards give adequate guidance on the subject of [university values and quality] and capture the significance of institutional decision making and the faculty’s role in that process?

• To what extent are these standards realized in application, by periodic inspection and, particularly, on occasions when major controversies erupt?

• Need more be done?
AAUP-CHEA questions: (RQ replies)

• To what extent are accrediting organizations alert to the importance of [university values]? (Generally aware/supportive, but without full attention, especially in the international context.)

• To what extent do [accreditation] standards give adequate guidance on the subject of [university values and quality] and capture the significance of institutional decision making and the faculty’s role in that process? (Any guidance likely limited to general principles, not specific implementation.)

• To what extent are these standards realized in application, by periodic inspection and, particularly, on occasions when major controversies erupt? (Controversies may trigger substantial reflection, but generally no regular, on-going, transparent assessment of adherence to core values.)

• Need more be done? (Yes!)
AAUP-CHEA suggestions for concrete action:

• **Emphasize [university values]** in the context of accreditation review, stressing [their meaning, essential value & contributions to quality].

• **Affirm the role** that accreditation plays in the protection and advancement of [university values]. *(Supportive statements are vital, but...)*

• **Review current accreditation standards**, policies and procedures with regard to [university values] and assure that institutions and programs accord with high expectations in this vital area. *(... move beyond statements to concrete, implementing processes/mechanisms. This is most important!)*

• Focus on [university values] at **accreditation meetings** *(Like now.)*

• **Explore partnerships** among accreditors to concentrate additional attention on [university values] and further secure the commitment of the entire accreditation community. *(SAR ready to help but need accreditors to lead!)*