

The Role of the Faculty in the Accrediting of Colleges and Universities

The statement that follows was approved by the Association's Committee on Accrediting of Colleges and Universities, adopted by the Association's Council in April 1968, and endorsed by the Fifty-fourth Annual Meeting.

Institutional evaluation is a joint enterprise between institutions of higher education and the accrediting commissions of regional associations. For their most effective work the accrediting commissions require the cooperative effort of qualified faculty members and administrators, who should be encouraged by their colleges and universities to participate in the work of the commissions. Within a college or university, the nature of the accrediting process requires common enterprise among the faculty, the administration, and to some extent the governing board. The appraisal of the academic program should be largely the responsibility of faculty members. They should play a major role in the evaluation of the curriculum, the library, teaching loads and conditions, research, professional activities, laboratories and other academic facilities, and faculty welfare and compensation, all in relation to the institution's objectives and in the light of its financial resources. To higher education generally, faculty members may exercise a special responsibility as the segment of the educational community that is in the best position to recognize and appraise circumstances affecting academic freedom, faculty tenure, the faculty role in institutional government, and faculty status and morale. This statement presents standards for the expression of faculty interest and responsibility in the accreditation process.

Recommended Standards for Institutions of Higher Education

1. Primary responsibility for the preparation of the academic aspects of the self-evaluation should rest with a committee composed largely of faculty members and responsible to the faculty as a whole. Additions or deletions should be made only after consultation with the authors of the sections of the report that are affected.
2. The self-evaluation should include a description of
 - a. conditions of academic freedom and tenure (including provisions for academic due process);
 - b. conditions of faculty participation in institutional government (including provisions for the orderly handling of grievances and disputes); and
 - c. faculty status and morale (including working conditions and total compensation).Significant differences of opinion in these and other areas should be reflected in the self-evaluation.
3. The completed self-evaluation should be made available to the entire faculty prior to its submission to the accrediting commission and should be subject to amendment in the light of faculty suggestions.
4. Representatives of the faculty, including members of appropriate faculty committees, should be available to meet with the visiting committee to discuss questions of faculty concern.
5. The report of the visiting committee should be made available to the entire faculty.

6. The faculty should be fully informed of the accrediting commission's actions after an evaluation and should be kept abreast of all significant developments and issues arising between the accrediting commission and the institution. It should participate, as in the self-evaluation, in any subsequent activities regarding the institution's accreditation.

Recommended Standards for the Regional Accrediting Commissions

1. Regular visiting committees should include full-time teaching or research faculty members.
2. A formally adopted institutional policy on academic freedom and tenure, consistent with the major provisions of the 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, should be a condition for accreditation.
3. Reports by regular visiting committees should take explicit account of
 - a. conditions of academic freedom and tenure (including provisions for academic due process);
 - b. conditions of faculty participation in institutional government (including provisions for the orderly handling of grievances and disputes); and
 - c. faculty status and morale (including working conditions and total compensation).

The reports should describe any significant shortcomings in these areas.

4. When significant shortcomings have been found in the areas listed above, the commissions should deal with these as with similar shortcomings in other areas, endeavoring to secure improvement and applying appropriate sanctions in the absence of improvement within a reasonable time.
5. A gross violation of academic freedom, tenure, or due process should, unless promptly corrected, lead to action looking toward withdrawal of accreditation.