

Since its inception in 1996-1997, CHEA has served colleges, universities, accrediting organizations, students and society in five major ways:

- 1. CHEA is a major national voice for accreditation to government and the public, consistently making the case for accreditation as a system of successful private sector self-regulation of higher education.**

CHEA is a forceful and persistent advocate for accreditation with Congress in meeting the challenge of reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and with the U.S. Department of Education in its work with accrediting organizations. CHEA provides ongoing service to students, the general public and the press to influence and inform their thinking about the value of accreditation.

- 2. CHEA assures the quality and rigor of accrediting organizations, scrutinizing these operations for their effectiveness in advancing academic quality and serving higher education, students and the public.**

Through its *Recognition Policy and Procedures*, CHEA holds institutional and programmatic accreditors responsible for meeting CHEA standards of quality. Additionally, the *CHEA Award for Outstanding Institutional Practice in Student Learning Outcomes* provides for the recognition of leadership in meeting current accountability challenges.

- 3. CHEA is a national and international authority on the U.S. accreditation enterprise, providing profiles and analyses of accreditation practices, policies and emerging issues.**

Through its print and electronic publications, CHEA provides authoritative and reliable information at the national level about accreditation operation, accomplishments and impact. Through its *Database of Institutions and Programs Accredited by Recognized United States Accrediting Organizations*, CHEA maintains the largest and most comprehensive Web-based compilation of accredited institutions and programs in the U.S., with information on approximately 7,700 institutions and more than 18,700 programs.

CHEA is routinely in the forefront of the latest developments in higher education that affect accreditation, including distance learning, student learning outcomes and international quality assurance. CHEA has also played a national leadership role in taking on the challenges of degree and accreditation mills that threaten legitimate higher education, students and society.

- 4. CHEA supports and strengthens the role of accreditation in maintaining the core academic values of higher education - commitments to institutional autonomy, academic freedom and institutional mission. These are the essential characteristics that have driven the success of U.S. higher education for 100 years.**

Positioned at the intersection of institutional and accreditation interests, CHEA plays a key role in keeping the importance of core academic values before these communities through publications, meetings and research.

- 5. CHEA serves as a major national and international forum for communication and exchange among accrediting organizations, institutions and programs.**

CHEA conferences, workshops and meetings bring together key actors in accreditation and higher education from around the world. With successful efforts such as the *CHEA Initiative*, the CEO/CAO Project, the Higher Education Transfer Alliance and Mediation Service, CHEA has extended this forum to embrace new and sometimes challenging issues vital to the future success of higher education.

For more information, visit CHEA's Web site at www.chea.org.

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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