ACCREDITATION ACROSS A BROAD SPECTRUM OF DISTANCE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

• 102 Accredited Institutions.
• Student enrollments span 500 to 130,000.
• Institutional offerings range from focus on specific discipline (Master of Fine Arts, Juris Doctorate) to multiple degree program offerings at associate, bachelor, and graduate levels.
• Broad diversity of institutional missions.
• Wide-ranging distance education delivery models:
  • Carnegie Unit
  • Competency-Based
    • Blended Models
    • Direct Assessment
    • Correspondence
• DEAC Commission
  • Five representatives from accredited institutions
  • Five representatives from the public
HOW DOES ACCREDITATION DEAL WITH SUB-STANDARD INSTITUTIONS?

1. High threshold for initial application acceptance at DEAC (early warning detection strategies)

   Before an application is accepted:
   - In-depth financial statement review
   - Full disclosure of all parties involved
   - Extensive background checking
   - Preliminary readiness assessment
   - On-site readiness assessment

2. Assuming an institution makes it through the above...
   - Comprehensive curriculum review
   - More financial assessment
   - No substantive changes
INITIAL ACCREDITATION

• **Maximum three year grant** for initial accreditation – no exceptions (five year renewal).
• Extensive scrutiny of substantive changes and student achievement.
• Approval to apply to participate in Federal Financial Aid/Title IV programs is a substantive change and requires a separate, comprehensive approval process to an additional on-site evaluation.
A. Student Achievement
The institution evaluates student achievement using indicators it determines are appropriate relative to its mission and educational offerings. The institution evaluates student achievement by collecting data from outcomes assessment activities using direct and indirect measures. The institution maintains systematic and ongoing processes for assessing student learning and achievement, analyzes data, and documents that the results meet both internal and external benchmarks, including those comparable to courses or programs offered at peer DEAC-accredited institutions. The institution demonstrates and documents how the evaluation of student achievement drives quality improvement of educational offerings and support services.

B. Student Satisfaction
The institution systematically seeks student and alumni opinions as one basis for evaluating and improving curricula, instructional materials, method of delivery, and student services. The institution regularly collects evidence that students are satisfied with the administrative, educational, and support services provided.

C. Performance Disclosures
The institution routinely discloses on its website reliable, current, and accurate information on its performance, including student achievement, as determined by the institution.
ANNUALLY, DEAC INSTITUTIONS PROVIDE:

- Audited or reviewed financial statements for review by DEAC;
- A detailed report of the institution’s assessment of student learning outcomes in relation to the institution’s mission;
- Graduation data (and where appropriate licensure examination data) for every program;
- Student satisfaction survey results;
- SARA Membership/State Authorization approvals;
- Comprehensive Annual Report.
WHEN ACTION IS WARRANTED TO ADDRESS COMPLIANCE CONCERNS

- Quarterly reporting
- Restrictions on substantive changes
- Undergo total re-evaluation of compliance with all standards to continue accreditation
- Special Directed Visit (announced or unannounced)
- Show Cause Order – includes public notice and disclosure of specific reasons for the show cause
THE “EARLY WARNING” PROCESS: WHAT IS THE CURRENT THINKING OF ACCREDITORS ON THIS ISSUE? HAVE ACCREDITORS MADE ANY CHANGES? WILL THEY BE MAKING ANY CHANGES?

- Delicate balance of assuring due process amidst heightening scrutiny of accreditation
- Mindfulness of institution mission
- Agree to common practices of transparency
- What about indemnification?
- More use of data analytics when reviewing and collating outcomes information
- Everything revolves around the student experience
THANK YOU

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