



New Approaches to Quality Review, Student Learning Outcomes, and Innovation

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CHEA 2019 Annual Conference
29 January 2019

Housekeeping – Poll Everywhere

Directions

- We're going to be using Poll Everywhere, which is an interactive polling tool and we want to be sure you're prepared!

- There are two ways to respond to the poll:
 1. Go to www.PollEv.com/erinknepler999 and respond to the poll
 2. Text ERINKNEPLER999 to 22333 to join the poll and respond

About NORC at the University of Chicago

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions.



NORC and the University of Chicago

While NORC is an independent affiliate, we maintain deep leadership and research ties to the University of Chicago.

For instance...

- UChicago faculty, administration, and trustees compose more than half of the NORC board.
- The two institutions jointly staff Academic Research Centers housed on the main campus.



Research Areas

Economics, Markets, and the Workforce



Education, Training, and Learning



Global Development



Health and Well-Being



Society, Media, and Public Affairs



Education, Training, and Learning

NORC's portfolio provides vital information on the needs and experiences of learners of all ages, the nature and quality of the training and education resources available to them, and the impact education has on other parts of their lives. NORC education researchers provide in-depth expertise on many important topics.

- Access to Education
- Early Childhood Education
- Education Technology
- Education Workforce
- Educational Attainment and Outcomes
- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Post-Secondary Education
- Professional Development, Job Training, and Adult Education
- School Improvement and Accountability
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)
- Student Performance

Exemplary Education Projects

Postsecondary Education; Professional Development, Job Training, and Adult Education; STEM



- Survey of Doctorate Recipients
- Evaluation of the Graduate Research Fellowship Program
- Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault
- National Education and Attainment Survey
- Evaluation of the Undergraduate STEM Interventions with Industry (USI2) Consortium Program

Poll Everywhere

How to Respond

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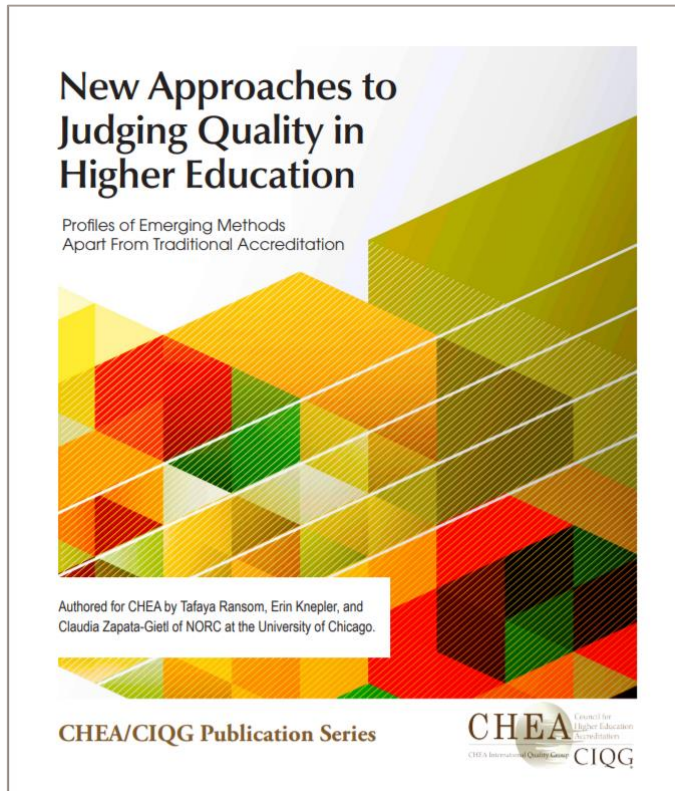


Our work with CHEA

1. New Approaches to Quality Review
2. Student Learning Outcomes (Student Achievement) and Accreditation
3. Innovation and Accreditation

New Approaches to Quality Review

Profiles of emerging approaches to judging quality in higher education, representing a range of stakeholder interests and perspectives.



Published June 2018, available at www.chea.org

Key Highlights

- **Part 1. Quality Assurance at a Crossroads** highlights perceived challenges for the U.S. accreditation system in a shifting higher education landscape and why this topic is of critical importance.
- **Part 2. New Models for Judging Quality in Higher Education** features new approaches that have emerged as potential complements to or replacements for the existing system of accreditation. (Including models currently practiced and detailed proposals.)
- **Part 3. Comparative Data Sets and National Rankings as Forms of Quality Review** addresses the potential for comparative data sets to serve as a form of quality review.

Survey of Accrediting Organizations

About the survey

- The *CHEA Survey of Accrediting Organizations* was organized around two topics.
- The first set of questions focused on student learning outcomes (student achievement) and accreditation.
 - Findings from these survey questions are presented in a four-part research brief series.
- The second section of the survey focused on innovation in accreditation and higher education.
 - Findings from those survey questions are presented in a white paper.

Forthcoming Research Products

4 Research Briefs on Student Outcomes/Achievement and Accreditation 1 White Paper on Innovation and Accreditation

The image displays a stack of research products from CHEA and NORC at the University of Chicago. The visible titles and authors are:

- How Are Student Learning Outcomes...?** Authored for CHEA by Tafaya Ransom, NORC at the University of Chicago.
- What Has Accreditation Done for the Evidence...?** Authored for CHEA by Tafaya Ransom, NORC at the University of Chicago.
- Is the Evidence Affecting Institutional Change...?** Authored for CHEA by Tafaya Ransom, NORC at the University of Chicago.
- What Is Working, Needs Improvement and Concerns Accreditors about Student Learning Outcomes and Achievement?** Authored for CHEA by Tafaya Ransom, NORC at the University of Chicago.
- Innovation in Accreditation: Findings from a Survey of Accrediting Organizations** (White Paper). Authored for CHEA by Erin Knepler, NORC at the University of Chicago.

The documents feature the CHEA logo (Council for Higher Education Accreditation) and the CIQG logo (CHEA International Quality Group). A red box in the white paper cover indicates the year 2019.

Survey of Accrediting Organizations

Who took the survey? How many accreditors responded?

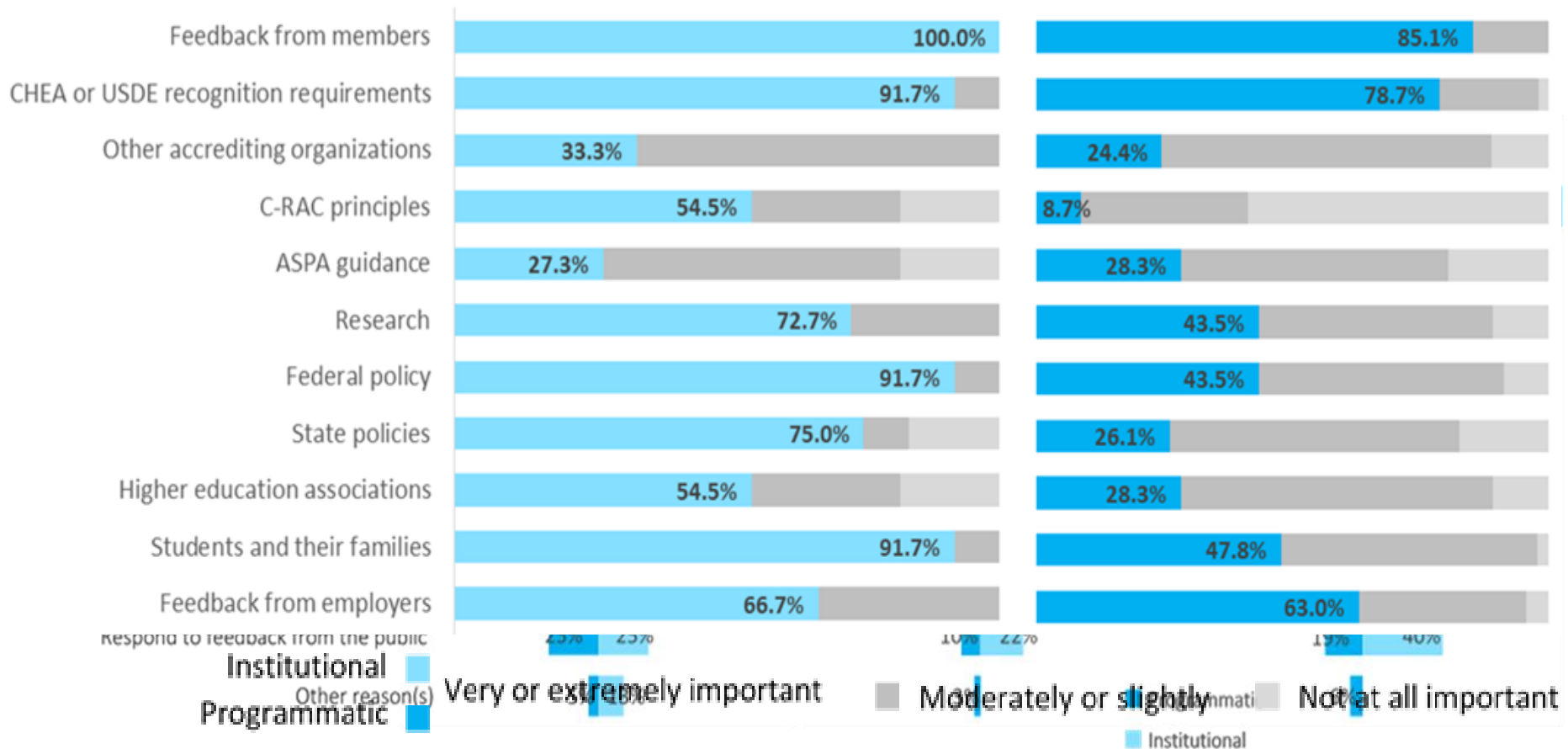
- NORC invited 86 accrediting organizations to participate in the *CHEA Survey of Accrediting Organizations* in 2018
- The survey was open for 5 weeks
- 64 out of 86 accreditors responded to the survey for an overall response rate of 74%
- 13 out of 19 institutional accreditors surveyed responded (68%)
- Responding institutional accreditors included 5 regional, 5 national career-related, and 3 national faith-related accrediting organizations
- 51 out of 67 programmatic or specialized accreditors surveyed responded (76%)
- The accreditors who participated in the survey authorize more than 6,000 institutions and more than 22,000 specialized programs

Research Brief 1: *How are Accreditors Currently Addressing Student Learning Outcomes?*

- Accrediting organizations address student achievement through standards, policies, and formal guidance.
- Programmatic accreditors reported higher numbers and percentages of student achievement standards than institutional accreditors.
- Institutional accreditors' approaches largely informed by feedback from institutions, recognition requirements, federal policy, and students and families.
- Programmatic accreditors largely consider feedback from programs, recognition requirements, and feedback from employers.
- Nearly all accreditors reported recent significant changes to standards, policies and guidance, and evaluation practices related to student achievement.
- Changes were to clarify intent, improve the rigor, foster transparency, simplify requirements, and respond to feedback

Research Brief 1: How are Accreditors Currently Addressing Student Learning Outcomes?

Exhibit 1. Rate the following in terms of importance for informing your organization's approach to student learning outcomes or student achievement and accreditation?



Research Brief 2: *What Has Been the Impact of Standards and Policies on the Evidence of Student Achievement?*

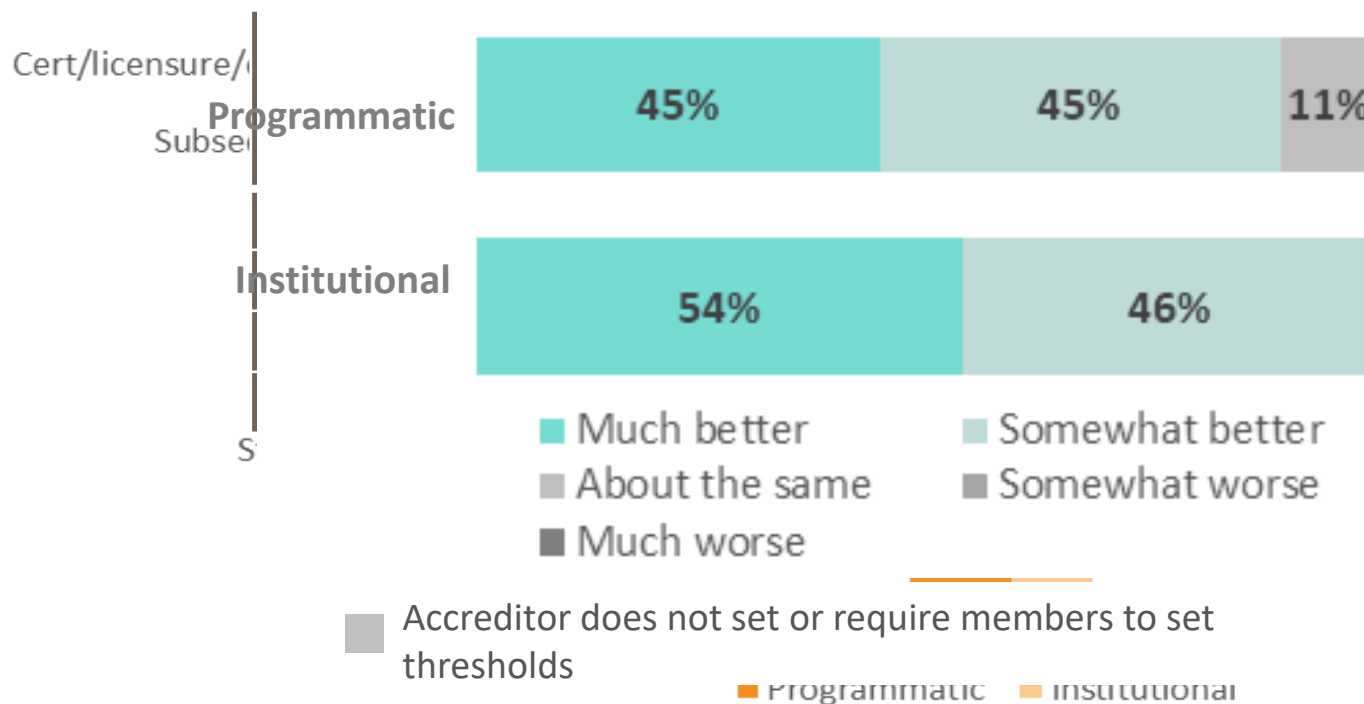
Sources, Quality, and Availability of Evidence...

- 92% of institutional and 89% of programmatic accreditors encourage or require specific indicators.
- Only 15% (Inst) and 23% (Prog) explicitly discourage or prohibit particular sources of outcomes evidence, such as grades and indirect measures like student satisfaction.
- 54% of programmatic and 46% of institutional accreditors reported setting bright line quantitative threshold requirements for at least one indicator.
- 23% of programmatic and 8% of institutional accreditors require members to set their own threshold requirements.
- Most accreditors feel like members currently provide adequate evidence of student achievement for accreditation purposes and that the quality of evidence has improved in the last five years.
- Most accreditors provide formal training and a selection of other resources to assist members in examining student learning and achievement

Research Brief 2: *What Has Been the Impact of Standards and Policies on the Evidence of Student Achievement?*

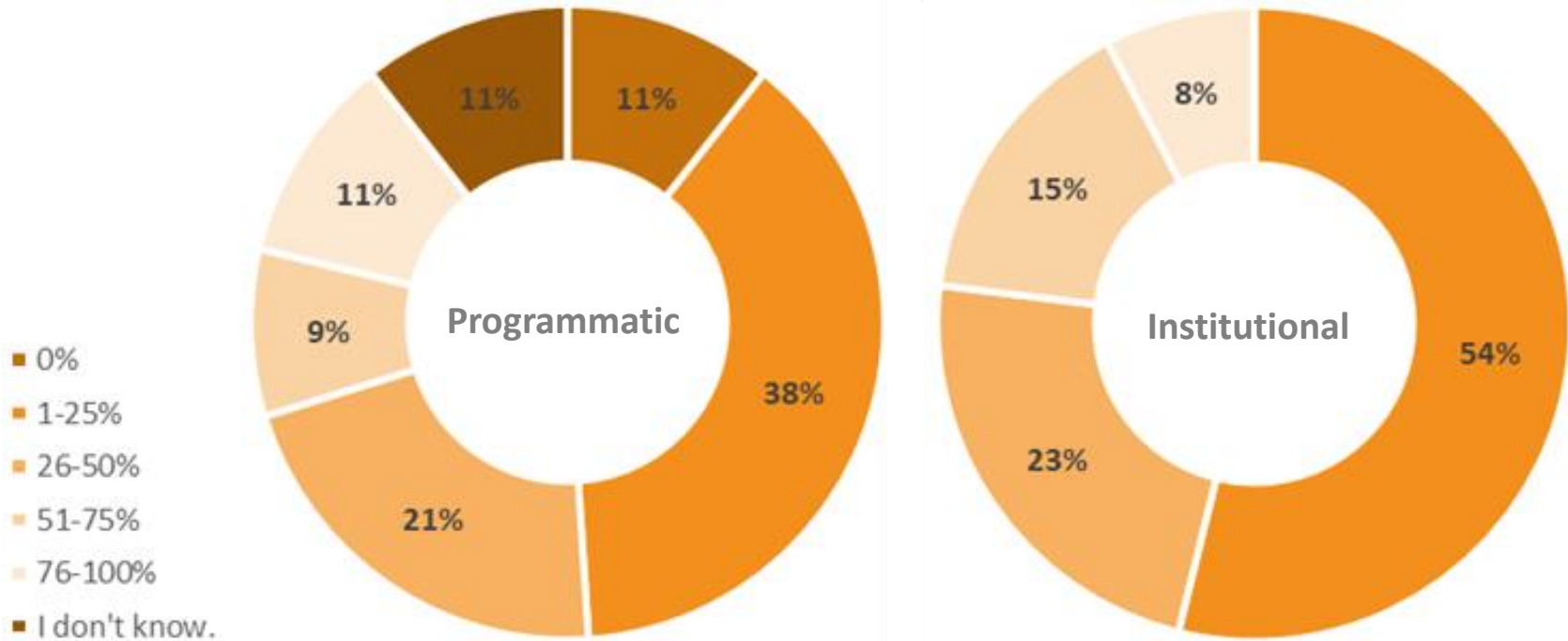
Exhibit 1. PI **Exhibit 3.** Does your accrediting organization require institutions or or encourage programs to meet bright line student learning outcomes or achievement requirements in order to obtain or retain accreditation?

Exhibit 4. To what extent has the overall quality of evidence of learning and Grad achievement that your institutions or programs provide through the accreditation process changed over the past five (5) years?



Research Brief 3: Is Evidence of Student Learning Affecting Institutions' and Programs' Accreditation Status?

- **Exhibit 2.** Roughly what share of accreditation actions (including ongoing monitoring) taken by your organization during 2017 were at least partially due to institutions or programs failing to provide adequate evidence of student learning outcomes or achievement?
to problems with evidencing student achievement.



Research Brief 4: *What Is Working, Needs Improvement, and Concerns Accreditors about Student Achievement?*

■ Working Well...

- Training, coaching, workshops, detailed guidance and clear expectations (Both)
- Review processes and evaluation strategies (Inst)
- Flexibility in defining student outcomes and publishing student achievement metrics (Prog)

■ Needs Improvement...

- Quality of measures used to evidence student learning and achievement

- Balancing act: quantitative vs. qualitative measures; institutional/program diversity vs. recognition requirements; “student learning” vs. “student achievement

■ Concerns about the future...

- Trend toward standardized “cookie cutter” definitions and approaches
- Use of “blunt” measures without regard for the rich heterogeneity of the missions, cultures, and student populations of institutions and programs.

Research Brief Series Conclusions

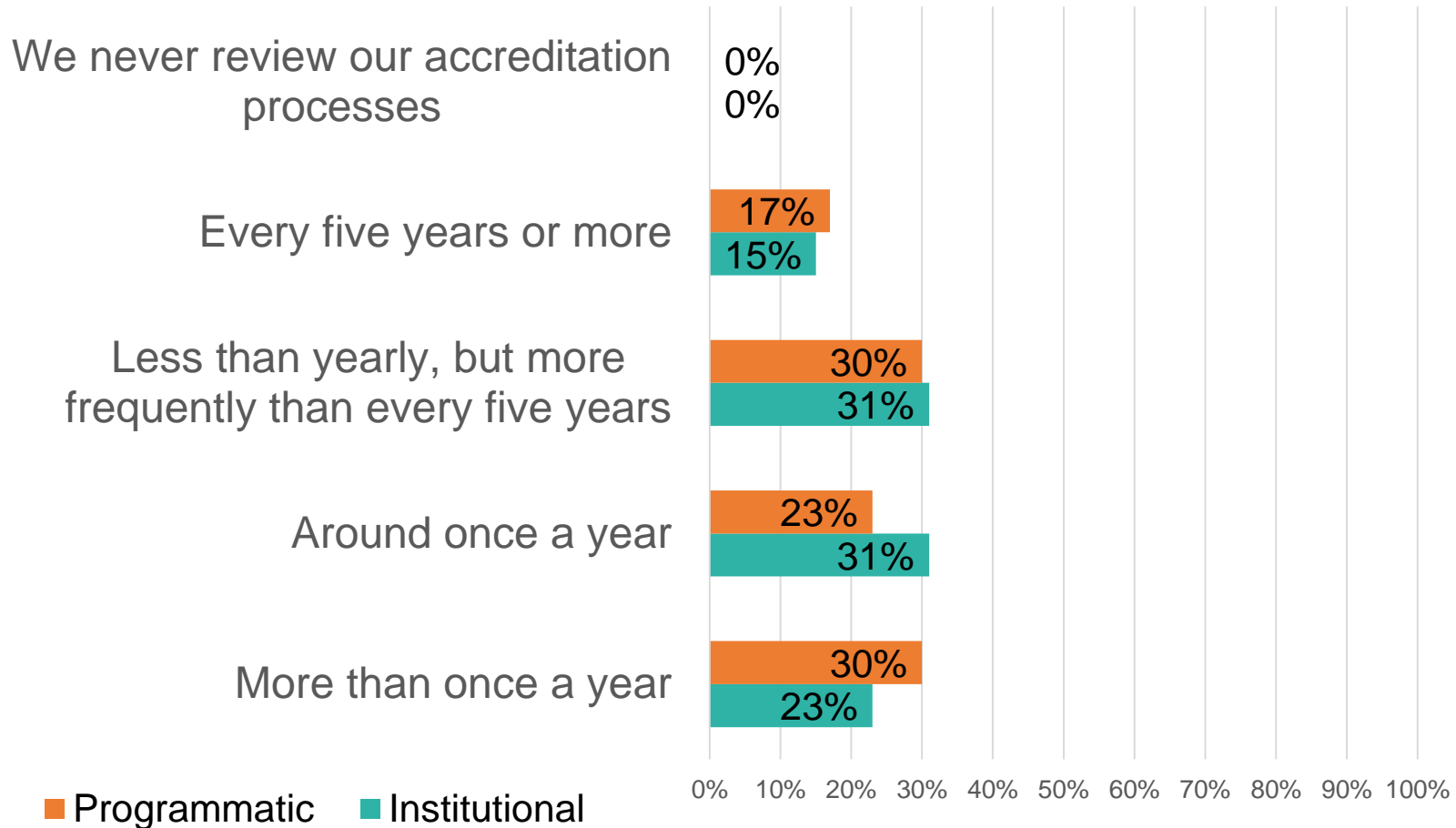
What have we learned? What does it all mean?

These results mainly speak to the **processes** accrediting organizations employ rather than insights about whether the processes yield valuable information about **student success**.

- **Directions for Future Inquiry**
 - To what extent are processes meaningful for assuring quality?
 - Do improvements in evidence correspond to real improvements in higher education quality?
 - What is the full spectrum of actions or strategies that accreditors use in working with institutions and programs to meet student outcomes requirements?

Innovation in Accreditation & Higher Education White Paper – Key Takeaways

Frequency of Review of Accreditation Practices



Poll Everywhere

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Innovation in Accreditation

For the purposes of this research, innovation in accreditation refers to the role of accrediting organizations in engaging, leading, and enabling new ideas and new approaches both in their own work and in higher education.



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White Paper – Key Takeaways

What did the data show?

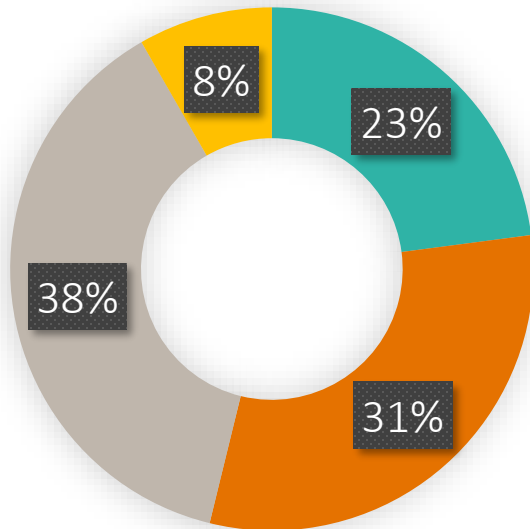
Innovation in Accreditation Practices

Accreditor Type	Innovative	Moderately Innovative	Not Particularly Innovative	Not Innovative
Institutional	23%	69%	8%	0%
Programmatic	11%	66%	21%	2%

White Paper – Key Takeaways

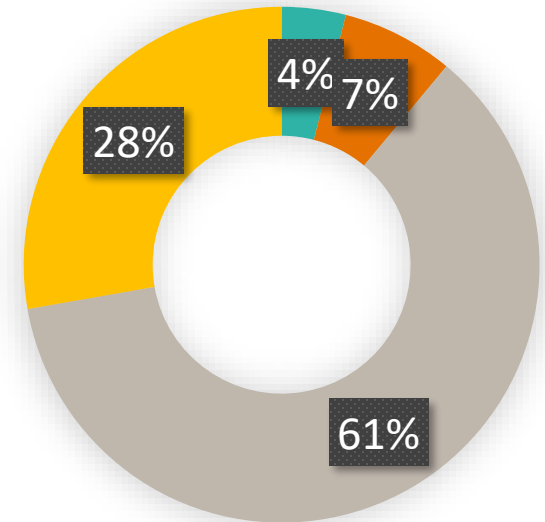
Likelihood of Innovation Standards or Policies for Innovative Offerings

Institutional



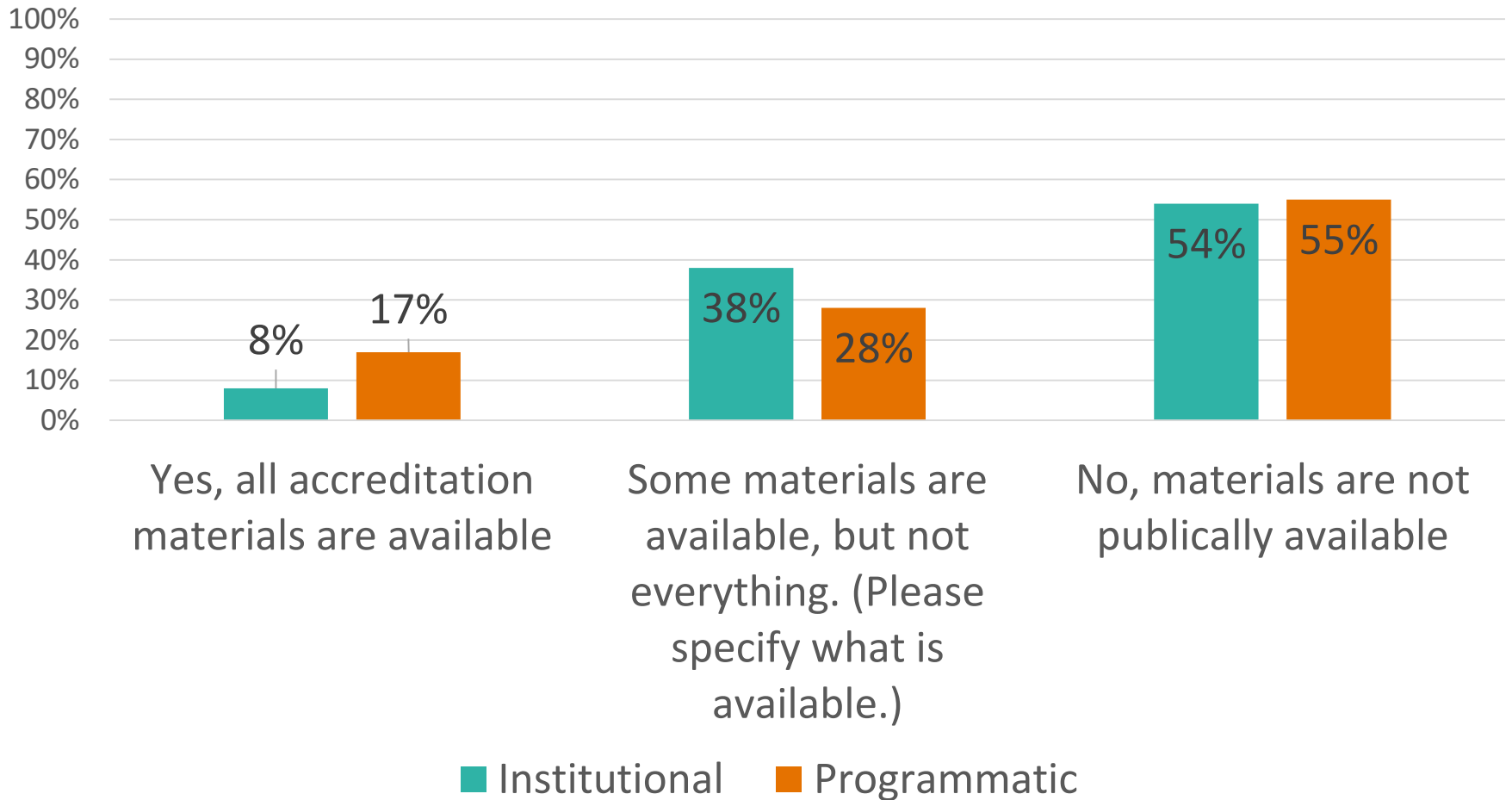
- In most cases, we have separate standards or policies for innovative offerings
- In some cases, we have separate standards or policies for innovative offerings
- We do not have separate standards or policies for innovative offerings
- This does not apply to my organization

Programmatic



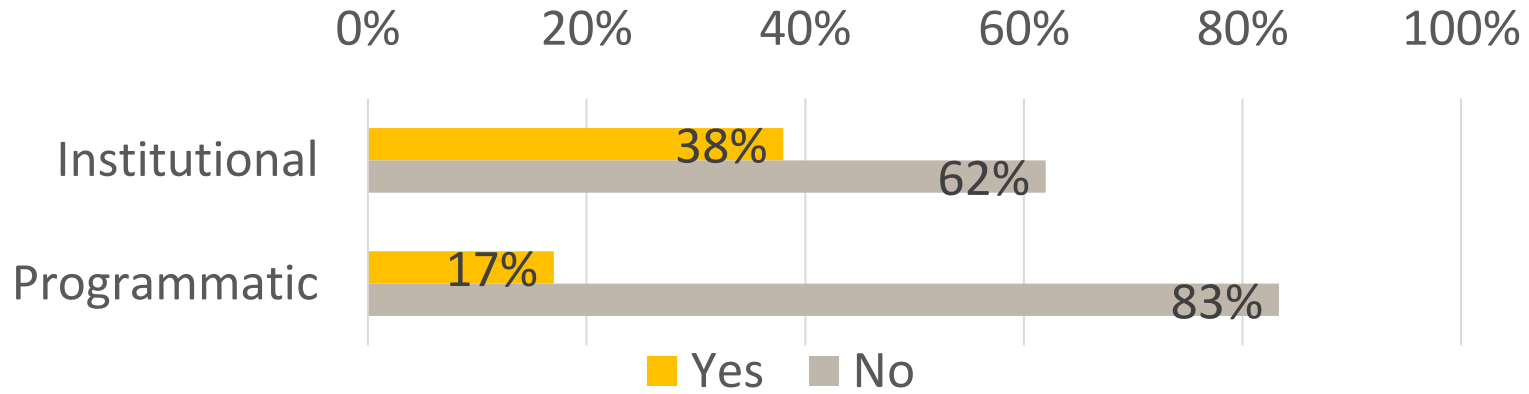
White Paper – Key Takeaways

Transparency of Accreditation Material

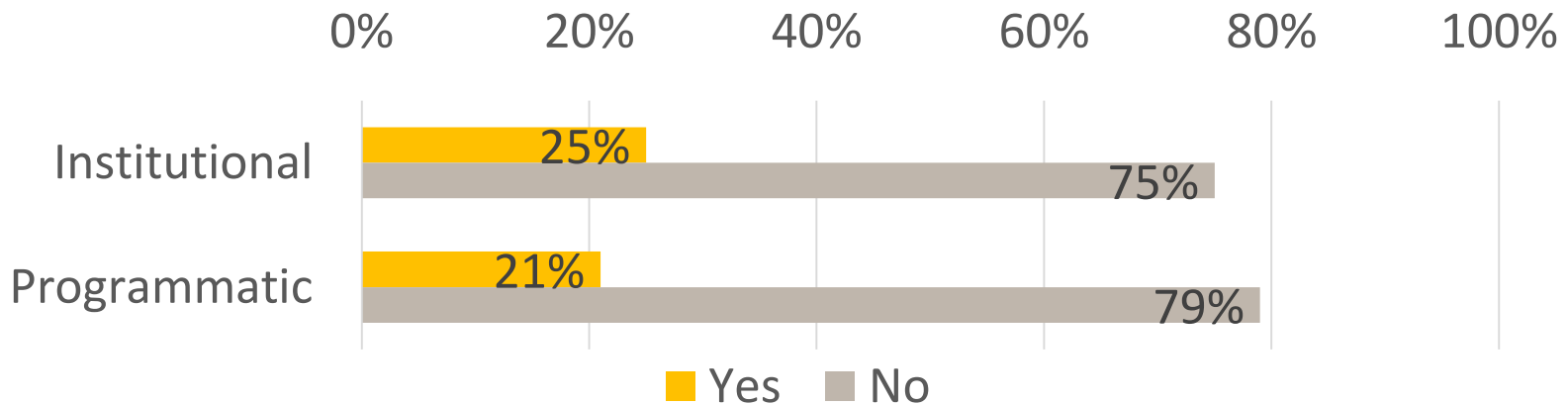


White Paper – Key Takeaways

Review or Accreditation of Nontraditional Providers



Plans to Expand the Scope of Accreditation Activities



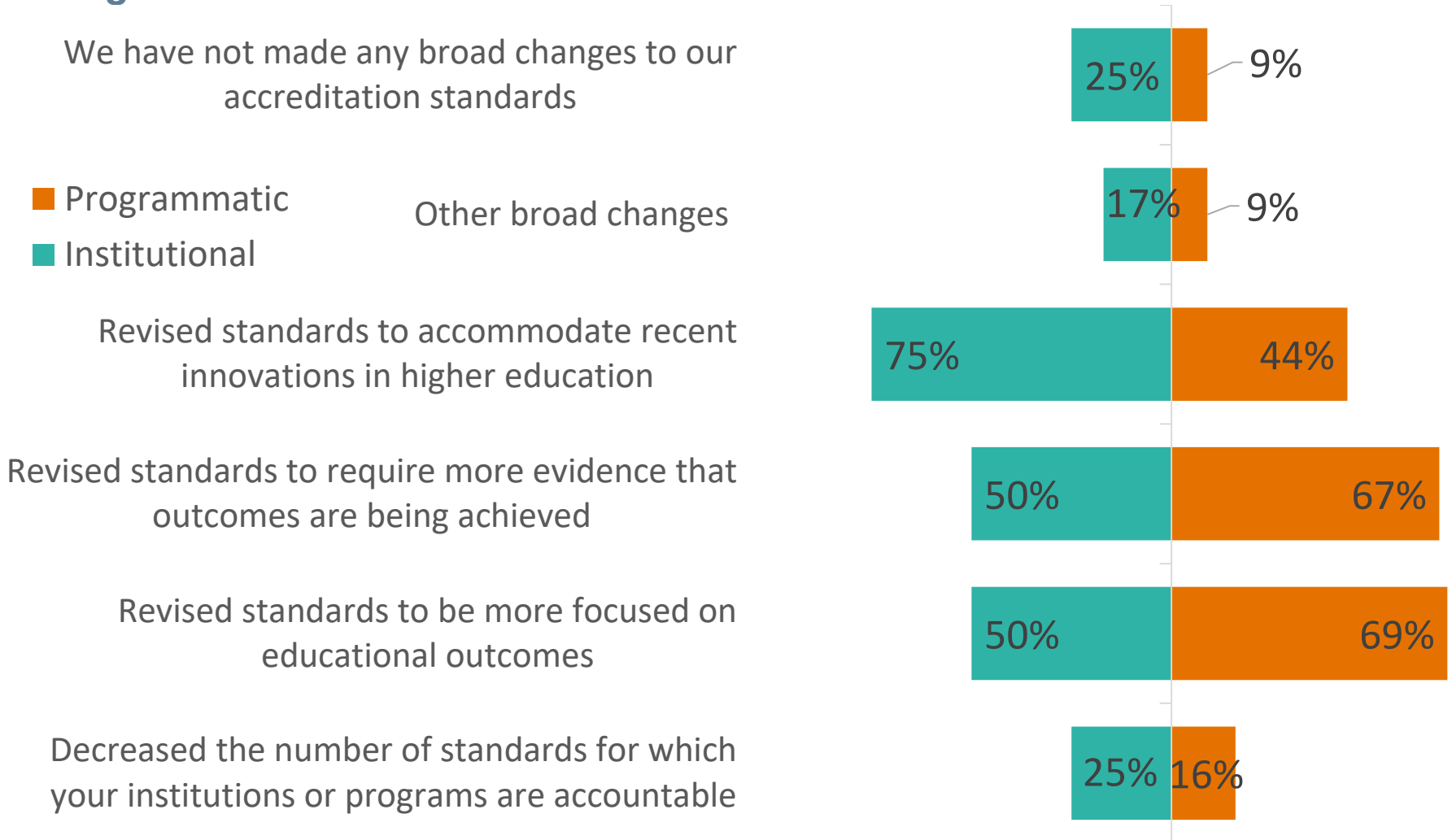
White Paper – Key Takeaways

Changes to Accreditation Standards in the Past Five Years

We have not made any broad changes to our accreditation standards

- Programmatic
- Institutional

Other broad changes



White Paper – Key Takeaways

Drivers of innovation in higher education

- When asked about the top drivers of innovation in higher education, institutional accreditors indicated their top three drivers are:
 - 1) changes in employer/workplace demands
 - 2) changes in student demographics
 - 3) changes in economic demands for higher education and concerns about sustainability.

- Programmatic accreditors indicated their top three drivers of innovation in higher education are:
 - 1) changes in economic demands for higher education
 - 2) changes in student demographics
 - 3) cost of traditional higher education providers.

White Paper – Key Takeaways

Barriers for innovation in accreditation

- When asked about the top barriers of innovation in accreditation, institutional accreditors indicated their top three barriers are:
 - 1) federal regulation
 - 2) state regulation
 - 3) funding constraints and the traditional higher education business model

- Programmatic accreditors indicated their top three barriers of innovation in accreditation are:
 - 1) funding constraints
 - 2) federal regulation
 - 3) the traditional higher education business model.

White Paper – Brief Conclusions

Institutional Accreditors

- Most institutional accreditors reported being moderately innovative with their accreditation practices.
- The factors most cited by accreditors for driving innovation in higher education and accreditation were changes in student demographics and employer and workplace demands, whereas federal regulation was cited as the top barrier to both higher education and accreditation innovation.
- *“We have initiated a cohort sharing model to foster and encourage cross-collaboration between and among our member institutions. Members’ successful practices in topical areas are showcased in quarterly webinars.”*
- *“Benchmarking to focus on outcomes in context of student population and additional graduate rate measures to complement and avoid the limitations of IPEDS and get a more complete picture of grad rates.”*

White Paper – Brief Conclusions

Programmatic Accreditors

- Similar to the institutional accreditors, most programmatic accreditors reported being moderately innovative with their accreditation practices, with most organizations (96%) indicating they reviewed their substantive change procedures at least every five years or more frequently.
- Programmatic accreditors cite changes in economic demands for higher education and changes in student demographics as top drivers of both higher education and accreditation innovation.
- *“[We] instituted outcomes-based accreditation, which encourages the programs to set their own program educational objectives and student outcomes such that the institution and programs set their own goals, plans, and means of meeting those goals. We show that we value innovation by providing awards for innovation, and publicity for the same through [our] publications.”*

■ **Directions for Future Inquiry**

- Do innovative accreditation practices correspond to real improvements in higher education quality and access?
- Does innovation in higher education improve equity?
- How can innovation be used to excel transparency initiatives?
- How will innovation impact the relationship between higher education and nontraditional providers?

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Thank You!



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