COPS AND COUNSELORS: TRENDS IN ACCREDITATION

COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION OF ALLIED HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS
ANNUAL MEETING

ATLANTA

APRIL 2017

JUDITH EATON, PRESIDENT
COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITATION
TRENDS

- Uncertainty and Unpredictability – Federal Government
- Federal Interest in Control of Accreditation
- Congress and Deregulation of Accreditation
- Accreditation as Public – Not Higher Education – Property
- Characteristic Responses – Accrediting Community

A Way Forward: CHEA Regulatory Relief Agenda
STIPULATING UP FRONT

- Accreditation important, valuable, essential to quality higher education. Something of which to be proud.

- Our fundamental values remain central:
  - Peer review
  - Academic freedom
  - Institutional independence
  - Accréditor independence
  - The intellectual integrity of the academy
  - The academic and intellectual leadership of the academy
TREND 1: UNCERTAINTY AND UNPREDICTABILITY - FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- NEW ADMINISTRATION: RECENT PERMANENT STAFF; LITTLE DISCUSSION
- NO SENSE OF DEFINING FRAMEWORK

TREND 2: FEDERAL INTEREST IN CONTROL OF ACCREDITATION

- USDE
  - TRANSPARENCY AGENDA – ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, COMMON DEFINITIONS, TERMINOLOGY, RIGOR, TRANSPARENCY
- CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP
  - DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS WANT CHANGE
  - MAJOR IDEAS: FEDERAL QUALITY INDICATORS – GRADUATION, DEBT/DEFAULT, JOBS AND EARNINGS, TRANSPARENCY, E.G., DASHBOARD, ACCOUNTABILITY
  - TWO BILLS: WARREN AND RUBIO-BENNET
  - INFLUENCED BY THINK TANKS – DIFFERENTIATED, “SKIN,” NEW FORMS OF QUALITY REVIEW, ALTERNATIVE FINANCING
BOTTOM LINE, TREND 2: NATIONALIZATION, STANDARDIZATION OF ACCREDITATION, FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACCREDITATION, EITHER FULL CONTROL OF GATEKEEPING OR END IT,

POWERFUL DIVERGENCE – FEDERAL INTEREST/ACADEMIC INTEREST IN ACCREDITATION...
TREND 3: CONGRESS AND DEREGERULATION OF ACCREDITATION

- MOSTLY FROM REPUBLICANS
- MORE CONVINCING PRIOR TO THE ELECTION
- NOT USED FOR ACCREDITATION YET

TREND 4: ACCREDITATION AS PUBLIC – NOT HIGHER EDUCATION – PROPERTY

- GATEKEEPING IS THE LENS FOR JUDGMENT: ROI AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
- MEDIA: TRANSPARENCY, SUMMATIVE JUDGMENT
- DEFERENCE TO HIGHER EDUCATION DIMINISHED: ACCREDITORS AS AGENTS OF GOVERNMENT AND NOT REPRESENTATIVES OF HIGHER EDUCATION
“COLLEGE ACCREDITORS NEED HIGHER STANDARDS”

“FORGET ACCREDITATION. BRING ON THE COLLEGE AUDIT”

“THERE NEEDS TO BE A BETTER WAY TO RATE THE QUALITY OF COLLEGES”

“MANY ACCREDITORS HAVE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST”

“WHEN WILL WE, AT LAST, DO SOMETHING ABOUT ACCREDITATION?”
TREND 5: CHARACTERISTIC RESPONSES – ACCREDITING COMMUNITY

- DOING MORE WITH OUTCOMES AND TRANSPARENCY
- CONTINUE LONGSTANDING PRACTICE
- PREFER THE GATEKEEPING ROLE
- IT’S NOT ENOUGH....
WHAT DO THE FIVE TRENDS SAY ABOUT “COPS AND COUNSELORS”? 

- PRESSURE IS FOR COPS
- ACCREDITORS TRYING TO PROTECT COUNSELORS
- ACCREDITORS TRYING TO DO BOTH FOR A LONG TIME
- RIGHT NOW, COPS ARE WINNING:
  - FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS
  - PRESSURE TO PLAY OVERSIGHT, NOT PARTNERSHIP, ROLE
  - AGENTS AND NOT REPRESENTATIVES
- WHAT IS NEEDED: MORE DEFINITIVE ABOUT PERFORMANCE AND TRANSPARENCY – THIS WILL BUY “COUNSELOR” FREEDOM
A WAY FORWARD: CHEA POSITION PAPER – REGULATORY RELIEF FOR ACCREDITATION

GOALS FOR ACCREDITATION

- PROTECT STUDENTS – RIGOR AND TRANSPARENCY
- ADVANCE INNOVATION – WITHIN TRADITIONAL ACCREDITATION AND ENLARGING THE ACCREDITATION SPACE
- SUSTAIN THE STRENGTHS OF ACCREDITATION – PEER REVIEW, FORMATIVE EVALUATION, INDEPENDENCE FOR LEADERSHIP
RELIEF IS ABOUT...CHANGES IN LAW, REGULATION, SUB-REGULATION

- OVERALL OBJECTIVE: REDUCE FEDERAL INFLUENCE AND AUTHORITY
- AREAS FOR RELIEF – TEN:
  - SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE
  - DEFINITION OF CREDIT HOUR
  - COMMON DEFINITIONS AND TERMS
  - CONFIDENTIALITY
  - PRESERVE RULE OF CONSTRUCTION
  - “NO” TO EXPANDING FEDERAL OVERSIGHT
  - NACIQI OVERSIGHT
  - NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING
REGULATORY RELIEF FOR ACCREDITATION AND COPS AND COUNSELORS

- MOVES TO STRENGTHEN COUNSELOR ROLE
- REDUCES COP ROLE
- IF IT IS HAPPENS IN FEDERAL RECOGNITION, IT AFFECTS ALL OF US
- FIGHTS AN EMERGING “AGENT OF GOVERNMENT” CULTURE IN ACCREDITATION

- FEDERAL REGULATION NOT ONLY MAKES ACCREDITATION MORE RULE-DRIVEN – IT ENCOURAGES A COMPLIANCE/OBEDIENCE-TO-REGULATION MENTALITY AMONG ACCREDITORS IN ALL THEIR WORK
- END OF COMPARTMENTALIZING OR BALANCING: GATEKEEPING VS. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT – IT IS NO LONGER WORKING – COPS APPROACH TO POWERFUL
IF SUCCESSFUL…

ACCREDITATION CONTINUES - SUSTAINING AND ENHANCING

- HIGHER EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH MISSION
- HIGHER EDUCATION’S TRADITIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM
- PEER REVIEW AND ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP
- ACADEMIC FREEDOM
IF SUCCESSFUL...

- REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE FEDERAL FRAME
- ELIMINATE/REDUCE THE FEDERAL ROLE IN ACADEMIC AND ACCREDITATION SPACE
- TAKE BACK “EFFECTIVE ACCREDITATION”
A WAY FORWARD: TO HELP WITH REGULATORY RELIEF...

- SUPPORT OUR POSITION PAPER
- SHARE WITH MEMBERS
- URGE THESE CHANGES AND COMMIT TO THESE GOALS
SUMMARY

FIVE TRENDS:

- UNCERTAINTY AND UNPREDICTABILITY – FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
- FEDERAL INTEREST IN CONTROL OF ACCREDITATION
- CONGRESS AND DEREGULATION OF ACCREDITATION
- ACCREDITATION AS PUBLIC – NOT HIGHER EDUCATION – PROPERTY
- CHARACTERISTIC RESPONSES – ACCREDITING COMMUNITY

A WAY FORWARD: REGULATORY RELIEF FOR ACCREDITATION
THANK YOU