

To: Accredited Programs
From: Council on Accreditation
Re: Actions of Council on Accreditation, October, 2008
Date: November 4, 2008

Hello,

The COA made several decisions this fall that may impact activities in your program over the next three to five years. These actions relate to the transition of the standards to outcome-based standards and re-structuring of the Council to prepare for specialty professional accreditation. Listed in the points below are updates and resources we hope your program may find helpful.

- The COA officially accepted the outcome standards. Between 2010 and 2013 use of the standards is optional, after 2013 all programs will use the 1.00-7.00 standards to prepare their self-studies. Our preference is for schools going through the accreditation process from 2010 to 2013 to consider using the 2004 standards as we work with the pilot schools to develop training resources and examples. We certainly support programs using the outcome standards during this time period yet we know our assistance will be ‘in-process.’
- The COA accepted seven programs to pilot the 1.00-7.00 standards commencing immediately. These programs are from Texas A & M, Chico, Arkansas Tech, Cortland, Greensboro, University of Illinois, and Ithaca.
- These programs will prepare resources for their respective self-studies and reviews that will be used in future COA trainings. The COA anticipates sharing their questions and processes with the accredited programs.
- Options currently existing in the 2004 standards will remain in place through 2013 and/or through the natural 5 year cycle of your accreditation period. Thus, if you are reviewed at hearings during 2013 with any of the 2004 options, they may remain in place until your next review and/or until specialty profession outcome standards become available at which time you may elect to undergo review using newly developed specialty standards.
- COA is entering into an affiliation pilot with Resort and Commercial Recreation Association to develop specialty criteria for ‘resort-commercial’ that will become one of the new 8.00 sets of outcome standards. As with the 7 pilot schools, this partnership will result in documents to use with other associations interested in designing specialty profession standards.
- Schools undergoing accreditation between the present time and 2013 may elect to use the outcome standards 1.00-7.00 accepted this year combined with the 2004 option standards. The COA realizes that because training materials and examples are in process of development, programs desiring to use the outcome standards may desire additional support. Consequently, several initiatives are underway to prepare and disseminate useful tools.
- The standards handbook found online includes an example matrix:
<http://www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentId=6161>

- The FAQ that is currently online will be updated and available during the spring 2009 semester.
- Additionally, training slides will be made available also online, spring, 2009.
- One useful resource is a paper written by Peter Ewell for CHEA:
www.chea.org/pdf/EwellSLO_Sept2001.pdf
- The operating structure of the Council is changing to better reflect the future accreditation of specialty professions. Henceforth the COA will consist of educators from accredited programs (5), practitioners (3), a university administrator representative, and a public representative (one who consumes our services). Council will have annual elections for these positions with a call disseminated through various listservs. Criteria for each position may be found in the updated handbook that will be placed on line in the near future.
- The proper citation for a program currently accredited is: Accredited by the Council on Accreditation, sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association.
- All council documents, with the exception of the outcome standards handbook, have been revised and consolidated into one handbook that will be placed on line in the near future. This document outlines the accreditation process and procedures applicable to the 2004 standards and will be modified slightly as the Council prepares procedural materials appropriate to the 2008 outcomes standards. Thus, programs undergoing review in 2010-2013 who anticipate using the 2008 outcomes standards may wish to make contact with the Council so that we can apprise you of updates resulting from the Council's shift to accreditation of learner outcomes; our pilot programs are anticipating sharing their experiences and resources.

Thank you for your dedication to the accreditation process. We look forward to your participation as we shift to the accreditation of outcomes standards. Please contact us with any questions or resources you might have, James O'Connor, joconnor@nrpa.org or call 703-858-2150.

Best of luck during the final weeks of this academic period.

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