



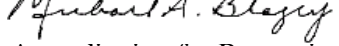
## **Council on Accreditation**

Parks, Recreation, Tourism  
and Related Professions

# **Memorandum**

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To: Accredited Programs and Visitors

From: Michael A. Blazey   
Past Chair, Council on Accreditation for Recreation, Park Resources and Leisure  
Services

Re: January 2014 COAPRT Communication

Date: January 14, 2014

Greetings Colleagues,

The Council on Accreditation for Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions held its spring meeting on April 30 and May 30, 2013. The fall meeting and hearings were held in conjunction with the 2013 NRPA Congress in Houston, TX on October 7, 2013. I am pleased to provide you with information on the status of Council, accredited programs, the new learning outcomes-based standards fully adopted on January 1, 2013, and other information of interest to accredited programs and visitors.

## **SPRING 2013**

### By-laws Revisions

Two additional duties were added to the Council Chair's responsibilities, assuring better compliance with Council on Higher Education expectations.

- Serves as the liaison to the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)
- Monitors CHEA standards

### Standards Revisions

- Addition of Standard 2.04 - The COAPRT accreditation decisions shall apply only to those degree requirements for which the institution or program seeks accreditation and do not extend to other offerings at the institution or within the program.

This standard was added to bring COAPRT into compliance with CHEA recognition standards. Implicit is an understanding that departments with multiple programs that may be accredited under COAPRT's scope, Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions including Therapeutic Recreation,

may seek accreditation for those programs by submitting separate 7.0 Series responses for each program. No department may claim that it is accredited unless all programs have attained COAPRT accreditation. (Please see the modification to *Suggested Evidence of Compliance* for Standard 3.07 below.)

- The former 2.04.01-.04 were renumbered 2.05.01-04 following the addition reflected above and Standard 2.05.01 was modified - Evidence shall be provided demonstrating that the program's assessment plan is compatible with expectations of the regional accrediting association and the institution.

This standard was added to bring COAPRT into compliance with CHEA recognition standards.

- Addition of Standard 2.05.05 - The program annually posts 7.0 series aggregated data and additional evidence reflecting program academic quality and student achievement on their program and/or departmental website. Such information shall be consistent with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements.

This standard was added to bring COAPRT into compliance with CHEA recognition standards.

- Suggested Evidence of Compliance for Standard 3.07 - NOTE: In the event that an academic unit offers additional degree programs not accredited by COAPRT, a clear differentiation must be made between programs that have achieved accredited status and those that have not.

This standard was added to bring COAPRT into compliance with CHEA recognition standards.

### Handbook Revisions

The following three changes were approved in order to be compliant with CHEA recognition standard 12C-3.

- A ninth Council Core Value was added on page 7: Innovation and experimentation
- Number 4, Steps in becoming accredited (page 11) was amended by adding, "Council values innovative and experimental approaches to addressing the standards."
- Assessment of Standards in the 1.0-6.0 Series (page 14) was amended by adding the text in bold.

It is the responsibility of the program to identify specific, compelling evidence that the features required by each standard are in place, describe that evidence in the Self-Study, **including any innovative or experimental approaches**, and share that evidence with the site visit team, as appropriate.

- Initial Interviews with Administrators (page 31): the following passage was amended.

In addition to being a professional courtesy, the visit with central administrators serves the important function of obtaining information on the following items to be reported in the visitation report:

- An assessment of the administration's support of the accreditation process;
- The of administration's perceptions of the program(s) in parks, recreation, tourism and related professional specializations
- The philosophy, structure, and programs of the institution; and
- Provides an opportunity for the visitation team to answer questions about the COAPRT accreditation process.

#### Enhanced review of Annual Reports

Council implemented new procedures for review of annual reports beginning with those submitted in 2013. These procedures were formalized at the Fall 2013 meeting and subsequently added as follows to the Handbook on pages 12 and 13.

Each Council member will review Annual Progress Reports from programs to which they have been assigned, verify submitted information, and make a preliminary determination of program compliance with standards 1.02 through 1.05, 2.05.05, 3.06, and 3.07. Similarly, the Council member will make a preliminary determination regarding compliance with reporting expectations for the 7.0 series. Council review will conclude by the end of April, with Council members submitting reports on their assigned programs to the Executive Committee and the Staff Liaison. In those cases where preliminary determinations indicated programs may be out of compliance with one or more standards, Council Executive Committee will conduct further assessments to be concluded no later than the end of May. An Executive Committee determination of non-compliance will result in conditions being placed on the program which will have until August 1 prior to the Council's Fall Meeting to bring the identified standard(s) into compliance. The COAPRT website will be updated to include conditions placed on programs resulting from the review of annual reports. If satisfactory remediation has not been made, the program may be placed on Warning at the Fall Meeting. Failure to remedy the issues resulting in Warning(s) by the specified date may result in withdrawal of accreditation due to noncompliance with the relevant standard(s).

## Council Actions

Council resolved conditions/warnings on nine programs.

### **Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)**

Council appeared before the CHEA Recognition Committee in June 2013 to request continued recognition. CHEA subsequently deferred the decision until 2014 pending the submission of additional evidence that Council fully meets Standard 12B.1. That standard requires the following.

#### **B. DEMONSTRATES ACCOUNTABILITY**

The accrediting organization demonstrates public accountability in two ways. It has standards that call for institutions to provide consistent information about academic quality and student achievement and thus to foster continuing public awareness, confidence, and investment. Second, the accrediting organization itself demonstrates public involvement in its accreditation activities for the purpose of obtaining perspectives independent of the accrediting organization. Representatives of the public may include students, parents, persons from businesses and the professions, elected and appointed officials, and others.

1. To be recognized, the accrediting organization provides evidence that it has implemented accreditation standards or policies that require institutions or programs routinely to provide reliable information to the public on their performance, including student achievement as determined by the institution or program.

Standards 2.05.05 and 3.07 were adopted and the annual report form and procedures modified to provide evidence of COAPRT compliance with this standard.

- 2.05.05 The program annually posts 7.0 series aggregated data and additional evidence reflecting program academic quality and student achievement on their program and/or departmental website. Such information shall be consistent with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements.
- 3.07 The program has a practice of informing the public about their COAPRT accredited programs.

### **FALL 2013**

#### Annual Progress Reports

In addition to adding procedures for the review of annual programs reports to the COAPRT Handbook, Council empaneled a subcommittee to revise the annual progress report. The new web-based format has been streamlined and modified to solicit the most

relevant information. Programs will be asked to verify compliance with all eligibility standards (1.0 Series), provide information on the number of students enrolled and their graduation rates, results of learning outcome assessments (7.0 Series), and that programs inform the public on their website about academic quality/student achievement (Standard 2.05.05), the harm of diploma mills (Standard 3.06), and their accreditation status (Standard 3.07). Programs are also asked to describe any major changes for the reporting year in the program's strategic plan, curriculum, resources, administration, or other areas of the program.

### CHEA Statement of Good Practices and Shared Responsibility

In an effort to better inform programs of their responsibilities in the accreditation process, Council took action to include Part I of the CHEA Statement of Good Practices and Shared Responsibility in the Conduct of Specialized and Professional Accreditation Review in the Handbook. Institutions and Programs are Responsible for:

1. Providing clear, accurate and complete information for an accrediting review.
2. Emphasizing the importance of having key faculty and administrators appropriately involved in the accrediting review.
3. Informing accrediting organizations of the desired purpose and expected results of the review in relation to institutional and program purpose and strategic direction.
4. Providing constructive information in a timely manner to accrediting organizations if there are concerns or difficulties that emerge during the accrediting review.
5. Understanding the standards, policies and procedures of the accrediting organizations with which institutions and programs are working.

### Disposition of Fees Charged for Policy Exceptions

Council has a practice of accepting requests for exceptions to policy. A question had arisen regarding the disposition of the fees charged for Council consideration of such requests, specifically if the fee would be returned in the event that an exception is denied. Language indicating such fees are non-refundable was added on page 45 of the Handbook.

### Assessment Plans and Assessment Reports

Council has noted some confusion between assessment plans and assessment report in response to requests for information to be submitted with the annual report. Assessment plans are dynamic documents that are updated frequently per Standard 2.05 and are compatible with the expectations of the regional accrediting association and the institution (Standard 2.05.01). An *assessment plan* identifies learning outcomes established by the program, how students are provided with opportunities to learn the requisite information and/or skills, the measures used to assess the learning and their rigor, the frequency with which and how the assessment measures are implemented, and the performance target indicating successful outcome achievement. An *assessment*

*report* restates all of the information in the assessment plan then reports on the assessment results.

### Procedures for Multiple Programs or Degrees in One Department

Council adopted the following language for inclusion in the handbook to address the issue of programs seeking to accredit more than one program or degree within a single department.

If an institution seeks accreditation for more than one program where all programs seeking accreditation are within the same department, only one Notice of Intent to Pursue Accreditation form and applicable fees must be submitted. On the other hand, if the programs seeking accreditation are in separate departments, a Notice of Intent to Pursue Accreditation form and applicable fees must be submitted for each program.

In addition to submitting the Notice of Intent identifying each of the programs for which accreditation is being sought, the self-study must include separate learning outcomes for each that are consistent with the 7.0 Series of Standards. Council will create separate action reports indicating compliance or non-compliance with the 7.0 Series of Standards for each program. One certificate will be issued to the academic unit; however, the website will identify all accredited programs and notification letters sent to the university will acknowledge all accredited programs.

### Sample Self-study

Council has developed a sample self-study to provide additional guidance for programs preparing visitation documents. It may be found at [http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Professional\\_Development/Accreditation/COAPRT/COAPRT%20Sample%20Self-Study\\_10-08-13.pdf](http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Professional_Development/Accreditation/COAPRT/COAPRT%20Sample%20Self-Study_10-08-13.pdf)

### Council Reorganization

Council reappointed Candace Goode-Vick from North Carolina State University and Maridith Janssen from California State University Long Beach, as educator representatives. Council will be seeking a Public Representative to replace Rick Harwell from Anchorage, Alaska and a college or university administrator and Rick and I are completing our terms of service.

Council Officers for 2012-2013 are Candace Goode-Vick, Chair, Michael Blazey, Past-Chair, and Maridith Janssen, Vice-Chair.

### Council Status

There are 80 accredited programs and two initial applicants, down from the historical high of 112 accredited programs reflecting the dissolution of some programs and current

financial exigency. Council is continuing outreach efforts to encourage formerly accredited programs, as well as those never having sought accreditation, to consider the benefits of seeking accreditation under the new outcomes-based standards.

The 2013 standards have been implemented fully following an initial beta test conducted with Texas A&M University and pilot testing programs at five colleges or universities. All five programs completed the process, along with several other programs opting to seek accreditation under the new standards.

California State University Long Beach became the first university to have two programs, General and Therapeutic Recreation, accredited following implementation.

Council members continued to serve as visitors during the past year in order to gain familiarity with implementation of the new standards, establish visitation procedures, and develop visitor training. As the number of experienced Council members increased, senior visitors were invited to participate in the visitations with qualified Council members serving as lead visitors. Pilot programs also agreed to assign a faculty member who has been trained as a visitor under the 2013 standards for service as a “shadow” visitor, thereby further adding to the pool of visitors familiar with the new standards.

With 22 visitations scheduled for 2013-14, Council conducted a comprehensive visitor training at the 2013 Congress. Per Council policy, individuals interested in serving as visitors are required to participate in training under the 2013 Standards, including those who attended training sessions within the past five years.

Representatives from programs scheduled for visitations in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 academic years are required to attend training in compliance with Standard 1.06. A webinar was scheduled for November 14, 2013 for those programs unable to send a representative to the training offered at the NRPA Congress in Houston. A copy of the webinar recording can be accessed online for free at:  
<http://www.nrpa.org/Store/detail.aspx?id=DI00046>.

#### Council Actions

- Resolved conditions/warnings on six programs
- Conducted hearings on two programs

#### Other News

- COAPRT continues as a participant in NRPA’s Best of the Best ceremony. Accredited/Reaccredited programs were presented with their certificate while being recognized at the ceremony.
- Council co-sponsored the fourth annual academic Quiz Bowl with NRPA at the 2013 NRPA Congress. Teams of students from accredited programs competed in the competition with the winning team from Texas A&M University crowned as

the national quiz bowl champion. Council extends appreciation to Dr. Gary Ellis and Dr. Robert Rossman for their continued support of and service to this program.