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September 9, 2008

**Memo to: College Presidents, Chief Instructional Officers,
Accreditation Liaison Officers**

From: Barbara Beno, President

**Subject: Updated Timelines for Rubric for Evaluating Institutional
Effectiveness**

In September 2007 I sent you a “Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness” that was developed by the Commission for use by colleges as they do self-assessment, by teams as they examine college adherence to the Standards of Accreditation, and by the Commission as it evaluates institutions. This letter reviews the purpose of the rubric and updates the timeline for institutional achievement on the student learning outcomes portion of the rubric-Part III.

The purpose of the rubric is to provide some common language that can be used to describe a college’s status *vis-à-vis* full adherence to the standards, as well as to provide a developmental framework for understanding each institution’s actions toward achieving full compliance with standards. The Commission hopes the rubric will be a useful tool for colleges and evaluators.

For more than a decade, the Commission’s Standards of Accreditation have required institutions to engage in systematic and regular program review as well as short and long-term planning and resource allocation processes that support the improvement of institutional and educational effectiveness. The 2002 Standards of Accreditation have added student learning outcomes assessment and improvement as important components to the required institutional processes of evaluation, planning and improvement.

As teams and the Commission evaluate institutional and educational effectiveness, these three areas – program review, the use of data and analyses to inform institutional planning and improvement, and the assessment of student learning – consistently emerge as areas in which institutions’ seem to need additional guidance. The Commission, colleges, and teams have all indicated they need a device other than pure narrative for understanding and describing how well colleges have done in reaching full compliance with the standards. In the past, self study reports and team reports have reflected the authors’ unique efforts to find appropriate summative descriptive terms to best communicate each institution’s status. This rubric provides for greater consistency in those descriptive narratives.

It is important to note the sample behaviors described in each text box of the rubric are *not* new criteria or standards by which an institution will be evaluated, but are rather examples of behavior that, if characteristic of an institution, would indicate its stage of implementation of the standards. College leaders may find

the rubric helpful in assessing what additional efforts institutions should undertake to achieve full compliance with the Standards of Accreditation.

Finally, the Commission has announced the expectations with regard to performance discussed in the rubric.

- Institutions and teams should be aware that the Commission expects that institutions be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in Program Review of academic programs (including all educational services). Many institutions have not developed sustained processes for evaluating administrative services, but all should be above the Awareness level in these efforts.
- The Commission also expects that institutions be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in Planning.
- The Commission further expects that institutions now be at the Development level or above in Student Learning Outcomes, since these are the *newest requirements* included in the Standards of Accreditation. When it adopted the 2002 Standards, the Commission stated it anticipated institutions would need eight to ten years to come into full compliance with the new standards on student learning outcomes assessment and improvement.
- The Commission recently announced it will expect institutions to be at the Proficiency level in the identification, assessment and use for improvements of student learning outcomes by Fall 2012.

Of course, the ultimate goal is for institutions to achieve the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in all three areas.

I hope that this rubric is helpful to you in your leadership work at your campus. The Commission welcomes any ideas for improving this rubric or its use to enhance institutional effectiveness.

BAB

Attachment: Rubric