

Adopted: May 25, 1989

ACADEMIC SENATE
OF
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, California

Background statement: Since 1968, the CSU has had in place a policy advocating and providing budgeting for the accreditation of all academic programs for which officially recognized professional accreditation was available. In the early 1980's, the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) developed a set of nine principles to guide the accreditation process. These principles are:

1. Evaluation must place its emphasis on the outcome of the educational process.
2. The standards applied in the accreditation process must not discourage experimentation, innovation, or modernization either in teaching methods or in the curriculum itself.
3. Recommendations should be diagnostic, not prescriptive.
4. The accreditation report must explicitly recognize institutional diversity.
5. Accreditation should not encourage the isolation or self-containment of an academic program.
6. The burden of accreditation must be kept as light as possible, both for the institution being accredited and for the accreditation team.
7. The institution being accredited should be consulted as to the composition of the accreditation team and has a right to expect that a majority of team members will be drawn from peer institutions and comparable programs.
8. In the case of professional schools, although there must be a significant input from the profession itself, the ultimate authority over educational policies must remain firmly in the hands of the academic institutions.
9. The greatest help an accrediting agency can offer to a program is to demand that its educational goals be clearly stated and that the program be reasonably calculated to achieve those goals.

AS-321-89/IC

**RESOLUTION ON
ACCREDITATION GUIDELINES**

- WHEREAS, Concern with certain of the processes and policies of particular accrediting agencies has been expressed periodically in meetings of the academic vice presidents, the Executive Council of the CSU Board of Trustees, and elsewhere; and
- WHEREAS, The CSU needs to be well-served in its relationships with various accreditation agencies; and
- WHEREAS, There is the possibility that different accreditation agencies may operate independently at different institutions, resulting in potential abuses; and
- WHEREAS, The CIC statement of principles has been adopted by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System (March 1987), by the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (1986), and by the Cleveland Commission on Higher Education; therefore, be it

Resolution on Accreditation Guidelines
AS-321-89/IC

Page Two

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, California endorse the complete statement of principles approved by the CIC on May 14, 1984 including, in addition to the nine standards summarized in the background statement above, the description for the standards; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, California urge the CSU Academic Senate to recommend to the CSU Board of Trustees and directly urge the CSU Board of Trustees to adopt the CIC statement of principles as system policy for the conduct of accreditation reviews.

Proposed By:
Instruction Committee
April 13, 1989
Revised May 25, 1989

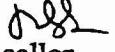
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of the Chancellor
400 Golden Shore
Long Beach, California 90802-4275
(213) 590-5708

Code: AAPP 89-15

Date: April 7, 1989

RESPONSE REQUESTED BY:
MAY 15, 1989

To: Vice Presidents, Academic Affairs

From: Ronald S. Lemos 
Assistant Vice Chancellor
Academic Affairs, Plans & Programs

Subject: Request for Review on Adopting Systemwide Expectations in Accreditation Processes

Since 1968, The California State University has had in place a policy advocating, and providing budgeting for, the accreditation of all academic programs for which officially recognized professional accreditation was available. Such funding supports the explicit costs of accreditation by agencies recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

While Board of Trustee policy strongly supports the goals and merits of professional program accreditation, we have been concerned from time to time with certain of the processes and policies of particular accrediting associations recognized by COPA. These have been discussed periodically in meetings of the Vice Presidents, Academic Affairs and the Executive Council. Most recently, at the September, 1988 meeting of the Academic Vice Presidents, there was discussion on the importance of the accreditation process and the need for the CSU system to be well served in its relationships with the various accreditation agencies. More specifically, discussion focused on the potential for articulating systemwide principles on what the CSU should expect from accreditation agencies. I would like to request that you review the attached document, "Accreditation: A Statement of Principles" developed by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) and advise this office on whether these principles should be adopted for the CSU.

Distribution: Presidents (with Attachment)
Academic Deans (with Attachment)
Chairs, Academic Senates (with Attachment)
Chancellor's Office Staff (with Attachment)
Associate Vice Presidents, Academic Affairs (with Attachment)

The CIC document was developed in the early 1980s under the leadership of Bryant E. Kearl, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. At the time it was felt that each accreditation agency was operating independently at each university, and questions of abuses were raised. The CIC felt that more institutional control of the accreditation process was needed. By stating what were felt to be reasonable expectations, the CIC universities desired to make accreditation reports more credible and helpful. "Accreditation: A Statement of Principles" was adopted formally by the CIC on March 14, 1984. In March 1987, the principles were adopted by the Board of Regents of the 26 institution University of Wisconsin system. In addition, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges adopted the principles at the 1986 annual meeting and the Cleveland Commission on Higher Education has incorporated the principles into its statement on accreditation.

Adoption of these principles would require a full campus consultative process, prior to an adoption recommendation to the Board of Trustees. If principles are adopted for the CSU, they would be sent to the appropriate accreditation agencies indicating that the principles were now system policy. Each accreditation agency would then be invited to provide written responses to the principles. Accrediting bodies would be provided with a clear understanding of important parameters under which accreditation reviews would be conducted in the CSU. We would expect responses of willingness to abide by these principles. A modified policy would be submitted to the Board of Trustees advocating program accreditation only if the accrediting association had agreed to subscribe to these principles.

I would like to request that you consult with the appropriate constituencies on your campus and advise us, by May 15, 1989, on whether your campus does or does not support the principles. If your campus supports the principles, I would also like to request your campus' position on the proposed change in Trustee policy. Thank you.

Attachment



***The Committee on
Institutional Cooperation***

March 14, 1984

***Accreditation:
A Statement
of Principles***

The Committee on Institutional
Cooperation
990 Grove Street
Evanston, IL 60201
312-866-6630

***The Committee on
Institutional Cooperation***

The University of Chicago
The University of Illinois
Indiana University
The University of Iowa
Michigan State University
The University of Minnesota
Northwestern University
The Ohio State University
Purdue University
The University of Wisconsin

The Committee on Institutional Cooperation is made up of the chief academic officers of eleven midwestern teaching and research universities: The University of Chicago, the University of Illinois, Indiana University, the University of Iowa, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, the University of Minnesota, Northwestern University, the Ohio State University, Purdue University, and the University of Wisconsin.

This statement represents the views of the Committee members as approved at their meeting of March 14, 1984. In combination with the more detailed requirements that have been developed over the years by the Council of Postsecondary Accreditation, it is intended to describe the standards that must be met if accreditation is to serve the universities, their students, and the public.

The Committee on Institutional
Cooperation
990 Grove Street
Evanston, IL 60201
312-866-6630

Accreditation: A Statement of Principles

External reviews of academic programs are a useful and valuable means of protecting quality in higher education. They can generate suggestions for program improvement that are both specific and practical. Often, too, the stimulation they give to institutional self-examination will produce improvements beyond those recommended by the accrediting body. Finally, the process of accreditation is itself a promoter of useful discussion about quality, standards, and performance in higher education.

For all of these reasons, even the strongest universities have an obligation to do their part to make accreditation work. To do so effectively, however, they must be able to argue that the accreditation process is fundamentally sound. They face a painful dilemma when they conclude that a particular accrediting agency has exceeded its competence or is using standards that relate less to quality of education than to disciplinary or professional self-interest. They can, of course, consider the option of withdrawing. Even when that is feasible, it can only be viewed as a last resort. The best universities cannot withdraw from any accreditation process without damaging their credibility and the respect accorded to them by other institutions.

This suggests that every university has some obligation to be frank about its own expectations from accrediting bodies. What standards should the accrediting body itself meet in dealing with the universities it is designed to serve? In connection with any proposed accreditation the CIC universities believe it is appropriate to ask the accrediting agency to indicate its acceptance of or state its reservations in regard to the following principles:

1. Evaluation must place its emphasis on the outcome of the educational process.

Criticisms by accrediting teams directed at procedural or organizational details must be based on reasonable evidence that those details affect the performance of graduates or the quality of education provided to them. Where quantitative standards are cited or advice is offered on the organization of the instructional unit, structure of the curriculum, sequencing of courses, teaching loads, methods of instruction, graduation requirements, and designation of the degree or other credentials conferred, the university has a right to expect evidence of a reasonably direct relationship between what is being recommended and the ability of the program to achieve its goals.

2. The standards applied in the accreditation process must not discourage experimentation, innovation or modernization, either in teaching methods or in the curriculum itself.

An accrediting body can legitimately point out deficiencies it believes will result from a particular innovation. It can ask for assurance that the institution will provide the resources that the innovation will require, and it can insist on some plan of evaluation. What it must not do is impose standards that place obstacles in the way of originality, creativity, or innovation on the part of the faculty or the institution.

3. Recommendations should be diagnostic, not prescriptive.

For example, an accrediting agency could properly question whether there is enough effort to evaluate teaching performance, or whether student input on such evaluation is adequate, but it should not try to prescribe a particular form of or approach to evaluation.

4. The accreditation report must explicitly recognize institutional diversity.

Every university has its own unique resources, methodologies, special mission, and educational philosophy. In particular, the interplay among graduate education, undergraduate education, research and public service will differ greatly among programs and from one university to another. Each university can expect that accrediting teams will familiarize themselves with its special circumstances and resources and will take them into account in relation to the programs being reviewed.

5. Accreditation should not encourage the isolation or self-containment of an academic program.

In larger universities with substantial program depth, even the most specialized professional school can benefit by drawing upon the library holdings, courses being taught, research in progress, and faculty interests in other schools and colleges. A university can expect an accrediting team to file a report that shows awareness of these supporting resources and actively encourages their shared use.

6. The burden of accreditation must be kept as light as possible, both for the institution being accredited and for the accreditation team.

Size of team and duration of the accreditation visit should be limited to the minimum necessary for a productive review. Data requirements and other advance preparation should also be kept to a minimum, recognizing, however, that encouragement for self-study may be one of the best products of an accreditation review. Finally, there must be a reasonable, fair, and expeditious procedure for questioning conclusions of the accrediting body without elaborate interim or supplementary reviews or reports.

7. The institution being accredited should be consulted as to the composition of the accrediting team, and has a right to expect that a majority of team members will be drawn from peer institutions and comparable programs.

A useful evaluation requires substantial input from persons who are directly familiar with the nature of the institution and program being accredited. Without experience at comparable universities or in similar programs, not even the most careful observer can acquire such familiarity in the course of a brief team visit or by reading documents, however carefully prepared.

8. In the case of professional schools, although there must be significant input from the profession itself, the ultimate authority over educational policies must remain firmly in the hands of the academic community.

If a realistic program of training for a profession is to be offered, the contributions of practitioners must be solicited and welcomed. We do our students no favor if we fail to equip them to practice according to standards enunciated by the profession and by society in general. At the same time, universities cannot escape the ultimate responsibility for what they teach, how it is taught, by whom, and to whom. They cannot meet this obligation if final authority over standards and sanctions for academic programs rests largely in non-academic hands. Forging an effective partnership between the professions and the professional schools in this regard will continue to offer a major challenge and opportunity for both groups.

9. The greatest help an accrediting agency can offer to a program is to demand that its educational goals be clearly stated and that the program be reasonably calculated to achieve those goals.

An accrediting body can offer useful advice – but only advice – as to whether, in its opinion, the resources are adequate to meet program goals. The primary question must be whether these goals are being achieved, however, rather than whether square footage or salary levels or teacher-student ratios or telephone accessibility meet some arbitrary measure. The essential purpose of accreditation is to assure the prospective student and the public that necessary standards of quality are being satisfied. However meritorious it may be to advance the salaries, perquisites, or working conditions of the faculty or administration of the unit being evaluated, the accrediting process is not the proper vehicle to use for this purpose. An educational program is validated first and foremost by how well it accomplishes the goals set for it. This, in turn, rests ultimately on how well its students and graduates are able to perform – no matter how difficult that is to appraise or predict.

THE COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

Robert McC. Adams, *Provost*, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO ■ Edwin L. Goldwasser, *Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs*, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN ■ Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, *Vice President*, INDIANA UNIVERSITY ■ Richard D. Remington, *Vice President for Academic Affairs*, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA ■ Billy E. Frye, *Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost*, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ■ Clarence L. Winder, *Provost*, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ■ Kenneth H. Keller, *Vice President for Academic Affairs*, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ■ Raymond W. Mack, *Provost*, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY ■ Diether H. Haenicke, *Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost*, OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY ■ Felix Haas, *Executive Vice President and Provost*, PURDUE UNIVERSITY ■ Bernard C. Cohen, *Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs*, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON.

The Committee wishes to express its special appreciation to Bryant E. Kears, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1978-1983, for his leadership in the preparation of this statement.

Memorandum

RECEIVED

JUN 2 1989

CAL POLY
SAN LUIS OBISPO
CA 93407

To : Charles T. Andrews, Chair
Academic Senate

Date : June 1, 1989

File No.:

Copies : Malcolm Wilson

From : Warren J. Baker
President

Subject: ACADEMIC SENATE RESOLUTIONS

This will acknowledge your memo of May 26 with which you forwarded the four resolutions adopted by the Academic Senate at its May 25, 1989 meeting.

Disposition of the Academic Senate resolutions are as follows:

1. Resolution on Foreign Language Exit Requirement (AS-319-89/IC)

The position of the Academic Senate is appreciated. In addition to the direction which it gives to the Statewide Academic Senators, the perspective of the Academic Senate will be used by me and other University personnel in discussions on this issue as appropriate.

2. Resolution on Academic Calendars (AS-320-89/IC)

The endorsements of the Academic Calendars by the Academic Senate is appreciated. I also understand the concerns with regard to Saturday examinations and encourage the Academic Senate to pursue any alternatives for this as academic calendars for 1992-93 and beyond are developed.

3. Resolution on Accreditation Guidelines (AS-321-89/IC)

The position of the Academic Senate with regard to Accreditation Guidelines is appreciated, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs will utilize the Academic Senate's perspective in responding to the correspondence from the Chancellor's Office (AAPP 89-15).

4. Resolution on Proposal to Establish the CIM Center (AS-322-89)

The resolution with regard to the establishment of the CIM Center will be utilized by the University as this proposal moves forward.