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**National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI)**

**Annual Report to the**

**U.S. Secretary of Education and the U.S. Congress**

**FY 2019**

**NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND INTEGRITY**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION AND CONGRESS**

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**NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND INTEGRITY**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION AND CONGRESS**

**Overview**

The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI or the Committee) respectfully submits this fiscal year 2019 report on its activities during fiscal year 2018 to the Secretary of Education (Secretary) and to Congress. Section 114(e)(2) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), mandates that NACIQI produce an annual report that contains four items:

* A detailed summary of the agenda and activities of, and the findings and recommendations made by, the Committee during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which the report is made;
* A list of the date and location of each meeting during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which the report is made;
* A list of the members of the Committee and;
* A list of the functions of the Committee, including any additional functions established by the Secretary through regulation.

# **Committee Agenda and Activities During Fiscal Year 2018**

NACIQI held two meetings during FY 2018:

* February 7-8, 2018
* May 22-24, 2018

Meeting agendas are provided with this report (Attachments A and C).

All meetings were held in the Washington, DC area. NACIQI deliberated on accrediting agency submissions and advised the senior Department official[[1]](#footnote-1) on matters concerning accreditation, the recognition process and the eligibility and certification process for institutions of higher education under Title IV of the HEA. The Committee received training on its advisory responsibilities on accreditation and the recognition process at the meetings. Department leaders addressed the Committee at each meeting.

During FY 2018, NACIQI reviewed the following types of applications:

* Fifteen applications for renewal of recognition from accrediting agencies;
* Seven compliance reports from accrediting agencies;
* One renewal of recognition for a state agency for public postsecondary vocational education;
* One compliance report for a state agency for public postsecondary vocational education;
* One renewal of recognition for a state nursing approval agency; and
* One compliance report for a state nursing approval agency.

NACIQI continued to use the pilot project as part of its ongoing deliberations of accrediting agencies to inquire how accrediting agencies use data as part of their decision-making, and what types of data they collect.[[2]](#footnote-2) As outlined in the FY 2017 Annual Report, NACIQI launched a pilot project at the June 2016 meeting to inform the Committee’s understanding of how accrediting agencies consider data on student achievement. The pilot project includes a set of standardized questions to pose to accrediting agencies undergoing recognition proceedings, as well as data provided by the accreditor dashboards. Consideration of these data has become a standard practice of NACIQI’s review of recognized accrediting agencies and informs the Committee’s recommendations.

Throughout FY 2018, NACIQI heard from several experts in the field to further inform the Committee on how to integrate better data into the recognition and accreditation processes. Toward that end, NACIQI heard testimony from a panel regarding student-level data and how a Federal student unit record database might inform policy makers and accreditors. Other presentations to NACIQI included a briefing on the outcome measures (OM) component of the Department’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), and a presentation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) on its Graduation Rate Dashboard tool.

The subcommittee on regulatory reform reported to the full Committee on draft recommendations to the Secretary of Education on regulatory reform in accreditation. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the recommendations with minor edits. A copy of these recommendations is included with this report (Attachment E).

NACIQI also discussed the oversight of for-profit institutions’ conversions to nonprofit entity status. The Committee established a subcommittee on substantive change to further research the issue, and to look broadly at substantive change requirements for accrediting agencies.

The subcommittee on data also reported to the Committee on its progress to explore how data are used by accrediting agencies to inform various success measures.

Diane Auer Jones, Principal Deputy Under Secretary Delegated to Perform the Duties of the Under Secretary, addressed NACIQI and the public regarding the Administration’s interest in reforming the accreditation regulations and the recognition process, particularly to reduce regulatory burden. She also announced the Administration’s plans to place accreditation on the Office of Management and Budget’s unified agenda for negotiated rulemaking in 2019.

NACIQI heard from 28 oral commenters in FY 2018.

NACIQI reviews all information submitted by an accrediting agency in support of its petition for recognition, as well as the staff analysis and public comments.

A summary of the Committee’s deliberations and recommendations regarding each agency review is provided with this report (see Attachment B and D).

# **Date and Location of NACIQI Meetings**

February 7-8, 2018 Washington Plaza

10 Thomas Circle, NW

National Ballroom

Washington, DC 20005

May 22-24, 2018 Double Tree by Hilton Washington DC Crystal City

300 Army Navy Drive

Washington Ballroom

Arlington, VA 22202

# **Committee Membership**

NACIQI has 18 members as follows:

* Six members appointed by the Secretary
* Six members appointed by the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, three of whom are appointed on the recommendation of the majority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives and three of whom are appointed on the recommendation of the minority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; and
* Six members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate, three of whom are appointed on the recommendation of the majority leader of the U.S. Senate and three of whom are appointed on the recommendation of the minority leader of the U.S. Senate.

Please refer to Attachment F for a list of NACIQI members, including the nominating source of each member, for fiscal year 2018.

# **Committee Functions**

NACIQI was established by Section 114 of the HEA of 1965, as amended by Section 106 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. By law, NACIQI advises the Secretary on the following:

1. The establishment and enforcement of the standards of accrediting agencies or associations under Subpart 2 of Part H or Title IV, HEA;
2. The recognition of a specific accrediting agency or association;
3. The preparation and publication of the list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies and associations;
4. The eligibility and certification process for institutions of higher education under Title IV, HEA, together with recommendations for improvements in such process;
5. The relationship between:
   1. Accreditation of institutions of higher education and the certification and eligibility of such institutions;
   2. State licensing responsibilities with respect to such institutions;
6. Other advisory functions relating to accreditation and institutional eligibility as the Secretary may prescribe by regulation.

# **Sources of Additional Information about the Committee**

For additional information concerning the Committee’s activities, please visit the NACIQI website at <http://sites.ed.gov/naciqi/>, or contact the Executive Director whose contact information is listed below:

Jennifer Hong, Ed.D.

Executive Director, NACIQI

U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Ave, SW, Room 271-03

Washington, D.C. 20202

Phone: (202) 453-7805

E-mail: Jennifer.Hong@ed.gov

1. **Senior Department** official means the senior official in the U.S. Department of Education who reports directly to the Secretary regarding accrediting agency recognition (34 CFR 602.3). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Further background on the pilot project is available on the NACIQI website under the June 2016 meeting records and is also published in each Federal Register notice announcing the meeting. Meeting records are accessible at: <https://sites.ed.gov/naciqi>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)