

Report of the Meeting

National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI)

February 28-March 2, 2023



_____/s/_____
Claude Pressnell Jr., EdD, Chair

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DISCLAIMER

This report summarizes the deliberations of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) at its hybrid February 28-March 2, 2023 meeting. The NACIQI is an advisory committee established by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and is subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act. This report represents the views of the NACIQI. The report has not been reviewed for approval by the Department of Education, and therefore, the report's recommendations do not purport to represent the views of the Department.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NACIQI was most recently authorized by Section 106 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. NACIQI's primary functions include advising the Secretary of Education on the establishment and enforcement of criteria for recognition of accrediting agencies under Subpart 2 of Part H, Title IV, of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), as well as the recognition of specific accrediting agencies or associations or a specific State approval agency. The NACIQI also advises the Secretary on the eligibility and certification process for institutions of higher education under Title IV, of the HEA, including the relationship between accreditation of institutions of higher education and the certification and eligibility of such institutions, and state licensing responsibilities with respect to such institutions.

NACIQI met February 28-March 2, 2023 using a hybrid model—in which most committee members and some Department staff met in-person while agency representatives, third party commenters, four committee members, and other Department staff participated virtually—to carry out its responsibilities to advise the senior Department official (SDO) with respect to the recognition of accrediting agencies.

NACIQI reviewed the following types of applications at its February 28-March 2, 2023 meeting:

- Seven applications for renewal of recognition from accrediting agencies; and
- Two compliance reports.

NACIQI reviews all information submitted by an agency in support of its petition, the staff analysis and report, and third-party comments.

Designated Federal Official, George Alan Smith, conducted elections for a NACIQI Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson. Claude Pressnell, Jr. was elected as Chair, and Zakiya Smith Ellis was elected as Vice-Chair. After both elections were completed, newly elected Chairperson Pressnell presided over the remainder of the meeting.

By pre-recorded video, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education Nasser Paydar addressed the NACIQI and other meeting participants. He welcomed new committee members and congratulated recent re-appointees. In his remarks, Assistant Secretary Paydar pointed out that the Department had released (1) a report that emphasized how important the American Rescue Plan and other relief funds were to institutions and students they serve; (2) a blueprint for a new income driven repayment plan; and (3) final rules to protect veterans and service members from predatory practices, increased accountability when colleges change ownership, including Departmental tools for holding colleges accountable if they take advantage of borrowers. Assistant Secretary Paydar also mentioned that the Administration recently secured the largest Pell Grant increases in a decade and that the Department has a partnership with accrediting agencies to explore how to provide enhanced Federal data.

Wallace E. Boston, Chairperson of the Accreditor Dashboard Subcommittee, presented the subcommittee's report, including recommendations for the full committee's review and approval. The NACIQI accepted the subcommittee's report and its recommendations. The report is posted on the NACIQI website: <https://sites.ed.gov/naciqi/archive-of-meetings/>.

During the policy discussion portion of the meeting, committee members raised numerous topics that Chairperson Pressnell placed in two categories: Regulatory Requirements and NACIQI Procedures. Regulatory requirement topics were transparency (including document availability in advance of meetings), student achievement outcomes, complaint processes, single school actions, and an update on the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools. NACIQI procedure topics were clarification on recusals, establishing guidance for agencies on introductory comments at meetings, review of sample motion language during each meeting, staff and committee consistency (including weight of criteria), and public trust and credibility as it relates to investigating agencies during the recognition period. Jennifer Blum and Robert Shireman agreed to co-chair a Regulatory Subcommittee at Chairperson Pressnell's request (1) with the understanding that most topics raised related to regulations would be addressed through the work of the subcommittee *and* (2) with the intent of having recommendations prepared for the full committee's review at the Summer 2023 meeting as potential recommendations for the Department's negotiated rulemaking process that will begin in Fall 2023. The Committee made requests of Department staff on some of the NACIQI procedures (e.g., recusal clarification and review of sample motions), while others were identified as topics that were more appropriate for ongoing conversations (e.g., public trust and credibility).

NACIQI members in attendance for all or part of the meeting included Claude Pressnell, Jr. (Chair), Zakiya Smith Ellis (Vice-Chair) Kathleen Sullivan Alioto, Roslyn Clark Artis, Jennifer Blum, Wallace E. Boston, Debbie Cochrane, Keith Curry, José Luis Cruz Rivera, David A. Eubanks, Arthur Keiser, Michael Lindsay, Molly Hall-Martin, Robert Mayes, Mary Ellen Petrisko, Michael Poliakoff, and Robert Shireman.

U.S. Department of Education representatives who participated in the meeting included: NACIQI Executive Director and Designated Federal Official George Alan Smith; Accreditation Director Herman Bounds; Office of the General Counsel staff members Donna Mangold, Angela Sierra, and Christle Sheppard Southall; and accreditation staff members Laco (LG) Corder, Elizabeth Daggett, Paul Florek, Nicole S. Harris, Charity Helton, Reha Mallory, Stephanie McKissic, Karmon Simms-Coates, Michael Stein, and Adrienne Walker.

SUMMARY OF AGENCY-RELATED ACTIONS

The following agencies were acted on—in the order they are listed—using NACIQI’s standard review procedures:

Consent Agenda: Compliance Report | Accrediting Agency

New York State Board of Regents, State Education Department, Office of the Professions, Nursing Education (NYSED)

Action for Consideration:

- Compliance Report

Recommendation:

- Accept the agency's compliance report and renew the agency's recognition for 17 months.
- Vote: 15 “Yes”; 0 “No”; 0 “Abstention”; 0 “Recusal”; 1 “Absent”

NACIQI Primary Readers:

- Molly Hall-Martin
- Arthur Keiser

Compliance Report | Accrediting Agency

Maryland Board of Nursing (MDBN)

Action for Consideration:

- Compliance Report

Recommendation:

- Renew the agency's recognition for 20 months.
- Vote: 16 “Yes”; 0 “No”; 0 “Abstention”; 0 “Recusal”; 0 “Absent”

NACIQI Primary Readers:

- Mary Ellen Petrisko
- Michael Poliakoff

Representatives of the Agency:

- Karen Evans, Executive Director, MDBN
- Dr. Sheila Green, Education Consultant, MDBN
- Michael Conti, Assistant Attorney General MDBN

Renewal of Recognition | Accrediting Agency

Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

Action for Consideration:

- Renewal of Recognition

Recommendation from Second Motion:

- Renew the agency’s recognition for five years. The agency has been found substantially compliant with the criteria listed in the final report, and Department staff recommends a monitoring report.
- Vote: 8 “Yes”; 2 “No”; 0 “Abstention”; 4 “Recusal”; 2 “Absent”

First Motion:

- Renew the agency's recognition for five years. The agency has been found substantially compliant with criteria 602.15 (a)(2), 602.22 (a)(1)(i), 602.24 (e), and Department staff recommends a monitoring report.
- Vote: 4 "Yes"; 6 "No"; 0 "Abstention"; 4 "Recusal"; 2 "Absent" **[FAILED]**

NACIQI Primary Readers:

- Jennifer Blum
- Mary Ellen Petrisko

Representatives of the Agency:

- Barbara Gellman-Danley, President
- Jo Alice Blondin, Chair, HLC Board of Trustees, President, Clark State College
- Richard Dunsworth, Vice-Chair, HLC Board of Trustees, President, University of the Ozarks
- Eric V. Martin, Executive Vice President
- Karen J. Solomon, Vice President and Chief Transformation Officer
- Marla Morgen, General Counsel for HLC

American Physical Therapy Association, Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy (CAPTE)

Action for Consideration:

- Renewal of Recognition

Recommendation:

- Continue the agency's recognition as a nationally recognized accrediting agency at this time, and require the agency to come into compliance within 12 months, and submit a compliance report due 30 days thereafter that demonstrates the agency's compliance. The Department staff recommendation is to approve the agency's change in scope removing the accreditation of master's degree programs.
- Vote: 13 "Yes"; 0 "No"; 0 "Abstention"; 3 "Recusal"; 0 "Absent"

NACIQI Primary Readers:

- Wallace Boston
- Michael Poliakoff

Representatives of the Agency:

- Peggy Blake Gleeson, PT, PhD, Chair, Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education
- Mary L. Romanello, PT, PhD, Director, Accreditation

Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

Action for Consideration:

- Renewal of Recognition

Recommendation:

- Continue the agency's recognition as a nationally recognized accrediting agency for five years and find the agency in substantial compliance with 34 CFR § 602.26 (f)(2) and submit a monitoring report within 12 months.
- Vote: 13 "Yes"; 0 "No"; 0 "Abstention"; 1 "Recusal"; 2 "Absent"

NACIQI Primary Readers:

- Arthur Keiser
- Zakiya Smith Ellis

Representatives of the Agency:

- Dr. Davie Gilmour, MSCHE Chair, President Emeritus, Pennsylvania College of Technology
- Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner, MSCHE Vice-Chair, President, SUNY Buffalo State
- Dr. Heather Perfetti, MSCHE President
- Dr. Idna Corbett, MSCHE Senior Vice President for Accreditation Relations
- Dr. Diana Barbu, MSCHE Senior Director for Research
- Kathie Jeffries, MSCHE Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer
- Dr. Amy Moseder, MSCHE Vice President for Policy and Regulatory Affairs
- Dr. Stephen Pugliese, MSCHE Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff
- Dr. Tracey Schneider, MSCHE Senior Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel

New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)

Action for Consideration:

- Renewal of Recognition

Recommendation:

- Accept the staff recommendation, except to find the agency substantially compliant with 602.23 (c)(1-3) and require a monitoring report on 602.23 (c)(1-3) to be submitted within one year.
- Vote: 13 “Yes”; 4 “No”; 0 “Abstention”; 0 “Recusal”; 13 “Absent”

NACIQI Primary Readers:

- David Eubanks
- Robert Shireman

Representatives of the Agency:

- Larry Schall, President of the Commission
- Russell Carey, Chair of the Commission, Executive Vice President for Planning and Policy at Brown University
- Pat O’Brien, Senior Vice President of the Commission
- Carol Anderson, Vice President of the Commission
- Laura Gambino, Vice President of the Commission

Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME)

Action for Consideration:

- Renewal of Recognition

Recommendation:

- Continue the agency's recognition as a nationally recognized accrediting agency at this time, and require the agency to come into compliance within 12 months with the criteria listed in the final report (specifically 602.26(F), and submit a compliance report due 30 days thereafter that demonstrates the agency's compliance.
- Vote: 12 “Yes”; 0 “No”; 1 “Abstention”; 1 “Recusal”; 2 “Absent”

NACIQI Primary Readers:

- Claude Pressnell, Jr.
- Zakiya Smith Ellis

Representatives of the Agency:

- Angela Smith, ACME Executive Director
- Anne Cockerham, ACME Board of Commissioners Chair

Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Senior College and University Commission (WASCUC)

Action for Consideration:

- Renewal of Recognition

Recommendation:

- Continue the agency's recognition as a nationally recognized accrediting agency at this time, and require the agency to come into compliance within 12 months with
- the criteria listed in the final report, and submit a compliance report due 30 days thereafter that demonstrates the agency's compliance. The agency has also been found substantially compliant with criteria listed in the final report, and Department staff recommends a monitoring report (see the final analysis for a detailed explanation of the monitoring report requirements).
- Vote: 11 "Yes"; 0 "No"; 0 "Abstention"; 3 "Recusal"; 2 "Absent"

NACIQI Primary Readers:

- Roslyn Clark Artis
- Robert Mayes

Representatives of the Agency:

- Phillip L. Doolittle, Commission Chair
- Tracy Poon Tambascia, Commission Vice-Chair and Chair-Elect
- Jamienne S. Studley, President
- Christopher N. Oberg, Executive Vice President
- Stephanie A. Bond Huie, Vice President

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN)

Action for Consideration:

- Renewal of Recognition

Recommendation:

- Renew the agency's recognition for five years.
- Vote: 13 "Yes"; 0 "No"; 0 "Abstention"; 1 "Recusal"; 2 "Absent"

NACIQI Primary Readers:

- Kathleen Sullivan Alioto
- Michael Stein

Representatives of the Agency

- Diane Evans Prior, Board Chair
- Keri Nunn Ellison, Director
- Nell Ard, Director, Interim CEO
- Suzette Farmer, Director
- Carrie Harris, CFO

ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

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