

Report of the Meeting

National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity

June 25-26, 2015



_____/s/_____
Susan D. Phillips Ph.D., Chair

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....4

Summary of Agency-Related Actions.....5

Undersecretary Ted Mitchell.....7

Experimental Sites Initiative.....8

Use of the Consent Agenda.....8

Complaints Against Accrediting Agencies.....8

2015 Draft Policy Recommendation Report.....8

DISCLAIMER

This report summarizes the deliberations of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) at its June 25-26, 2015 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

The NACIQI was most recently authorized by Section 106 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. The 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.

The NACIQI met to carry out its responsibilities with respect to the recognition of accrediting agencies and State approval agencies at its June 25-26, 2015 meeting at the Sheraton Pentagon City, 900 South Orme Street, Arlington, Virginia. Undersecretary Ted Mitchell addressed the NACIQI regarding the Department's postsecondary initiatives. Following the NACIQI's review of agencies for recognition, the Committee continued its discussion of policy recommendations to the Secretary in preparation for the reauthorization of the HEA.

The NACIQI reviewed compliance reports from eight accrediting agencies and one request for an expansion of scope. Except for recommendations regarding two accrediting agencies, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission (NCA HLC), and the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN), the NACIQI's recommendations concur with the staff recommendations. The NACIQI reviews all information submitted by an agency in support of its petition, as well as the staff analysis and report.

NACIQI members in attendance for all or part of the meeting included Susan D. Phillips (Chair), Arthur Keiser (Vice Chair), Kathleen Sullivan Alioto, Simon Boehme, Hank Brown, Jill Derby, Roberta Derlin, George French, Anne Neal, Richard O'Donnell, William Pepicello, Arthur Rothkopf, Cameron Staples, Ralph Wolff, Frank Wu, and Federico Zaragoza. U.S. Department of Education representatives who participated in the meeting included: NACIQI Executive Director and Designated Federal Official Jennifer Hong, Accreditation Director Herman Bounds, Sally Morgan and Donna Mangold (Office of General Counsel), Elizabeth Daggett, Valerie Lefor, Charles Mula, Steve Porcelli, and Rachael Shultz.

SUMMARY OF AGENCY-RELATED ACTIONS

The following agencies were acted on as a consent agenda with the following recommendation:

*Recommendation: Vote 13-0 (Recusals: Derby)

Move to recommend that the Assistant Secretary accept the recommendations as stated on the Consent Agenda for those agencies listed.

American Psychological Association, Commission on Accreditation (APA)

Recommendation: Expand the agency's scope as requested.

NACIQI Primary Readers: Anne Neal, Kathleen Sullivan Alioto

American Optometric Association, Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE)

Recommendation: Renew the agency's recognition for two and one half years. As requested by the agency, remove the following preaccreditation category from the ACOE scope of recognition:

Candidacy Pending for optometric residency programs in Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.

NACIQI Primary Readers: Federico Zaragoza, William Pepicello

Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools, Accreditation Commission (AARTS)

Recommendation: Renew the agency's recognition for two and one half years.

NACIQI Primary Readers: Arthur Keiser, Hank Brown

National Association of Schools of Dance, Commission on Accreditation (NASD)

Recommendation: Renew the agency's recognition for four years.

NACIQI Primary Readers: Federico Zaragoza, Richard O'Donnell

National Association of Schools of Music, Commission on Accreditation (NASM)

Recommendation: Renew the agency's recognition for four years.

NACIQI Primary Readers: William Pepicello, Simon Boehme

National Association of Schools of Theatre, Commission on Accreditation (NAST)

Recommendation: Renew the agency's recognition for four years.

NACIQI Primary Readers: Cameron Staples, Roberta Derlin

The following agencies were acted on using the NACIQI's standard review procedures:

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

Action for Consideration: Review of compliance report

Recommendation: Vote 7-0 (Recusals: Keiser, Pepicello, Zaragoza, Derlin)

Move to recommend adoption of the staff report that ACEN be found to not meet the requirements for recognition, specifically that it be "separate and independent." It makes this recommendation without expressing any view on the corporate structure of ACEN, other than it must comply with the requirement that it be "separate and independent." NACIQI observes that there are authorized accrediting agencies that function within a larger corporate structure, as well as those that are fully stand

alone. It also recommends, consistent with regulations, that the record be open for a period of three months to allow supplementation with new information not available at this time, regardless of the party that submits that new information.

Discussion: The NACIQI agrees with adoption of the staff recommendation regarding the non-compliance finding, but adds further language to clarify the NACIQI's neutrality with regard to the corporate structure of ACEN to deter the agency's use of the NACIQI's recommendation in its current legal dispute with the agency's parent association in the state of New York. The NACIQI further adds language to its recommendation to keep the record open for three months as to allow supplementation of new information which may bring the agency into compliance. The NACIQI's recommendation would permit review of this information, should it be provided by the parent association and not by the accrediting agency.

NACIQI Primary Readers:

Frank Wu, Jill Derby

Representatives of the Agency:

Dr. Marsal Stoll, Ed.D., MSN, ACEN

Dr. Mary Lou Rusin, Ed.D., RN, ANEF, ACEN

Mrs. Sharon Beasley, ACEN

Mr. Patrick McKee, Legal Counsel, McKee & Mitchell, LLC

Third Party Commenters:

Marsha Howell Adams, Ph.D., RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN, National League for Nursing (NLN)

Beverly I. Malone, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, NLN

Brother Ignatius Perkins, OP, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, FNYAM, ANEF, NLN

Linda S. Christensen, JD, MSN, RN, CNE, NLN

Peggy Walters

Linda Miles

Kathleen Hudson

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission (NCA HLC)

Action for Consideration: Review of compliance report.

Recommendation: Vote of 7-4 (Recusal: Derlin, Pepicello)

NACIQI recommends that the Assistant Secretary renew the agency's recognition for two and one half years. And require the agency to come before NACIQI to discuss retention, persistence, and completion rates at the next NACIQI meeting.

Discussion: The NACIQI agrees with adoption of the staff recommendation regarding the agency's recognition, but adds further language to require the agency to provide an oral discussion at the next meeting regarding retention, persistence and completion rates. The recommendation was an outgrowth of discussion regarding the graduation rates of some of the institutions accredited by the accrediting agency. This discussion evolved to the NACIQI's role and authority in asking outcome-oriented questions of recognized accrediting agencies to help inform the NACIQI's role in providing policy recommendations to the Secretary.

NACIQI Primary Readers:

Anne Neal, Simon Boehme

Representative of the Agency:

Dr. Barbara Gellman-Danley, President, Higher Learning Commission

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NEA CIHE)

Action for Consideration: Review of compliance report.

Committee Recommendation: Vote 11-0 (Recusal: Staples)

NACIQI recommends that the Assistant Secretary renew the agency's recognition for a period of two and one half years.

Discussion: The NACIQI concurred with the staff recommendation, and continued its line of questioning with regard to graduation rates, and its discussion regarding student outcomes.

NACIQI Primary Readers:

George French, Roberta Derlin

Representative of the Agency:

Dr. Barbara Brittingham, President, NEA CIHE

UNDERSECRETARY TED MITCHELL

On Thursday, June 25, 2015, Undersecretary Ted Mitchell presented to the NACIQI regarding the Department's postsecondary initiatives. Undersecretary Mitchell was joined by Deputy Under Secretary Jamie Studley.

The Undersecretary began by thanking the NACIQI for its work, and highlighted the importance of accreditation within the Department's overall higher education agenda. In light of the President's North Star goal for postsecondary degree attainment, the Undersecretary outlined three topics: access, affordability, and high-quality outcomes. Undersecretary Mitchell then provided a summary of the Department's work in each of these topical areas. He stated that the focus on outcomes is where the NACIQI and the Department can work together. Undersecretary Mitchell also discussed "risk-based" accrediting as an exciting opportunity for the accreditation process; the importance of transparency and common definitions/processes among accreditors; improved communications between the Department and the NACIQI; and improved communications between the Department and accrediting agencies. The Undersecretary's comments were followed by questions and comments from NACIQI members, at which time the Undersecretary underscored the importance of the triad in ensuring educational quality, and the need for accreditation to be flexible to new modes of delivery.

EXPERIMENTAL SITES INITIATIVE

On Friday, June 26, 2015, David Musser, Office of Federal Student Aid, presented information regarding the Department's Experimental Sites Initiative. Congress authorized the Department to conduct limited experiments that allows the Department to waive certain statutory and regulatory requirements in order to determine how changes to those requirements might improve the administration of the Title IV program, or improve student outcomes. The presentation was followed by questions and comments by NACIQI members.

USE OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

On Friday, June 26, 2015, Jennifer Hong, Executive Director, reviewed the NACIQI's criteria for placing an agency on the consent agenda, to include: 1) No compliance issues identified in the final staff report; and 2) No oral commenters. Referencing the statutory provision under 20 USC 1099b(n)(2), which states that the Secretary will place a priority of review for those agencies that either are the subject of the most complaints or that accredit institutions that participate most extensively in Title IV programs, she raised for discussion whether members wanted to continue with the current consent agenda criteria, or exclude agencies from the consent agenda that are determined to fall into either of those categories. NACIQI members discussed the consent agenda and decided to continue with the current criteria for placing an agency on the consent agenda.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST ACCREDITING AGENCIES

On Friday, June 26, 2015, Herman Bounds, Director, Accreditation Group, discussed the different types of complaints received by the Accreditation Group, how staff responds to complaints, and that staff will begin to incorporate the number of complaints filed during an agency's recognition period in the final staff report.

2015 DRAFT NACIQI POLICY RECOMMENDATION REPORT

The NACIQI edited and finalized the 2015 draft policy recommendations. NACIQI members emphasized the importance of timely distribution of the document in its final form. This document is posted on the NACIQI Web site.