

The Evaluator

Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

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Technology Update

CONCUR

ACICS has reactivated Concur. This is our tool for submitting reimbursements and should be used for this travel cycle (Winter 2010) going forward. The link will re-appear on your home login page. (Go to www.acics.org/login/ Link to Concur).

When entering your expenses in Concur, make sure you select the correct visit project ID (verify with the visit date). Please double check with your staff member or visit memos if you are unsure of which project to choose. *Expense reports without the correct visit ID may be returned to the evaluator.*

Although Concur has the ability to submit expenses via fax, ACICS is not using this feature. For reconciliation purposes, after entering your expenses in Concur, print the Concur expense report cover page entitled 'ACICS Detailed Report' and make sure to attach your original receipts. Please mail to:

Attn: Accounting
ACICS - 750 1st St, NE, Suite 980
Washington, DC 20002.

Concur sends out Automatic E-mail Notifications. These notifications communicate that your expense report has changed statuses. In certain instances, an e-mail may notify you that your expense report has "expired": this informs you that the report has moved from the travel staff member's approval queue on through our normal process to the accounting department. Unless otherwise, specifically, contacted by accounting, you will not have to make any corrections to your report. For refresher training use: Concur Travel & Expense End User Training, videos, Quick Start Guide and FAQ which are available on your Concur homepage.

ACICS HAS GONE GREEN

Winter 2010 is a first for ACICS. This cycle all institutional self-study documentation for new grant and initial applicants has been submitted electronically. We are proud of this achievement and are excited about the positive step towards a less paper-laden process.

How does this affect evaluators? Institutions are no longer submitting self-study binders to team members.

How will I receive the information needed to conduct a visit? The visit information has changed as well as the format used to send to team members. Institutions will click "print" from their login home page and the new grant and initial applicant's self-study submissions will be combined into one .pdf document. This information will be sent to team members either electronically via email or burned to a CD and sent standard mail. ACICS suggests copying the information you receive electronically from the institution on to your flash drive which can now house all of the materials for these visits.

What if I like the paper forms? ACICS acknowledges the changes to our processes, and realizes that the format in which you are receiving the institutional information may place a burden on you. For those interested, ACICS will accommodate any printing expenses you may incur. We have added a reimbursable expense of up to \$25 for self-study printing. This is a no receipt required expense. ACICS trusts your judgment when calculating the out-of-pocket expense you incur when printing key information necessary for review prior to the visit. Identify this expense under the "Printing Cost" category.

What information will I receive? As stated, we've simplified the self-study submission requirements. The following documents will be sent to team members, as noted, either on a CD as a single .pdf document or electronically via email:

- Application (Please see NOTE below)
- Visit Memo
- Class Schedule (updated)
- Program Update Form (updated)
- Faculty & Staff Form (updated)
- Catalog
- Inventory of Equipment (updated)
- IEP
- Self Study Narrative
- Academic Credit Analysis
- Future Plans
- Explanation

NOTE: Applications associated with New Grants will be blank. Please ignore the first 4 pages of the combined .pdf document. The visit information will be found on page 5: the "Visit Memo."

Since this process is new, ACICS is asking that team members open the information submitted and review as soon as it arrives. Please report any mis-prints or errors to your staff coordinator as soon as possible. This will greatly assist us with reviewing our first round of electronic self-study submissions.

ACICS LOGIN REMINDER

When you login to complete your expense reimbursements, please take a minute to review your addresses (MY ACCOUNT / MY ADDRESSES) and make sure the address you want your reimbursement check to be sent to is marked as your "Primary" address.

You have the ability to change this as often as necessary, so please take the responsibility of ensuring your checks reach you at the address of your choosing.

Message from the Executive Director

ACICS is pleased to present, through this publication, a number of measurable enhancements in conjunction with our technological systems project. Our member institutions with grants of accreditation through 2010 have uploaded their new grant applications and supporting documents through our E-Business site. We are excited about this process for new and initial application submissions. As a result, the amount of paper and binders that must be created by institutions and then lugged around by evaluators

has been dramatically minimized. We understand that this may constitute a large change for evaluators; and we have made accommodations to assist in the transformation. ACICS staff appreciates any feedback that you may have due to these alterations. Thank you again for your cooperation with ACICS to fully functionalize our new processes.

Sincerely,

Al

decorum (n)

By Jennifer Gwatkin

Synonyms: dignity, propriety, modesty, correctness, appropriateness, demureness, restraint, politeness, tact, gentility.

Antonym: abandon

Source: Encarta online.

From receiving the invite, to conducting the visit, and on through submitting your final expense report, participation in an ACICS site visit is an exercise in *decorum*. While we are unable to predict certain issues or situations, all members of teams are tasked with upholding the *Canons of Ethical Responsibility*. Here are some tips to help ensure a seamless travel cycle for all involved:

Before the visit

1. Prior to accepting a role on an evaluation team, disclose any potential conflicts of interest. (*Do you work for another institution of common ownership? Are you a former employee of the institution? Do you intend to be directly involved with this institution in the future?*)
2. Communicate your proposed travel itinerary to the staff coordinator. As early as possible, make sure to inform staff and chair of any time conflicts such that arrangements may be made accordingly. (Earlier departing flight, conference call during time on site, etc.)
3. If in reviewing the “pre-visit” materials you have concerns, route them through the staff coordinator. Do not contact the institution directly.
4. If you run into any glitches while traveling to the visit, get in touch with the staff coordinator.
5. Arrive at the pre-visit team meeting on time and prepared to discuss any potential issues.

During the visit

1. Be cognizant of noise-levels in the team room so as to minimize distraction.



2. Assist fellow team members as much as possible.
3. Channel requests through the chair and staff coordinator.
4. Produce the kind of carefully-written and edited report you would expect to receive.
5. Remember: While we are at the institution, we are guests! Make every effort to be as unobtrusive as possible.

After the visit

1. Please be responsive if the staff coordinator contacts you with questions about your report.
2. Follow the established “reimbursement guidelines” when preparing your expense reports. If you have questions along the way, do not hesitate to contact the visit’s staff coordinator.
3. Refrain from communication with the institution you visited. Alert the staff coordinator if you are contacted.
4. Provide constructive feedback about your visit experience using the “review of performance” tools on the ACICS website (<http://www.acics.org/performance-review.aspx>).

From the *Canons of Ethical Responsibility for ACICS Evaluators*:

“The continued existence and acceptance of privately administered accreditation presumes the recognition that the aggregate of the system is based upon the singular integrity of all those individuals charged with the adoption of policies, procedures, standards, and the evaluation and measurement of institutional performance. Members of evaluation teams play a vital role in the maintenance and preservation of the system. Therefore, the fulfillment of this role requires an understanding by evaluators of their relationship with and function in the accreditation process.”

New Accreditation Coordinator

“As a former teacher, I am excited about furthering my role within the field of education. I started my career at ACICS at the front desk where I had an opportunity to learn about the entire accreditation process. Now, I am happy to take this next step. I have come to understand what a large role ACICS plays in the function of maintaining quality education. I am honored and excited to take on this newest of challenges.”



Elizabeth Fain
Accreditation Coordinator

Criteria Changes

At each Council Meeting, specific areas of the *Accreditation Criteria* are reviewed thoroughly. From the December Council meeting, there are no substantive changes. Any discussion of changes can be found in the Memorandum to the Field which is posted on our Web site at www.acics.org. If you have specific questions about the *Accreditation Criteria* please contact any member of the travel staff or Ms. Kimberlee Moore; Manager, Policy & Institutional Review, at kmoore@acics.org. For a copy of the most recent version of the *Accreditation Criteria*, please visit the Web site and click the Publications tab.

Hotel Receipts

Through no fault of evaluators, this past cycle, a number of hotel bills did not get transferred from the staff coordinator’s credit card to the evaluator’s. Just as a reminder, ACICS policy is that the staff member book the hotel with their credit card; then, upon arrival at the hotel, the evaluator transfers the reservation and expenses onto their credit card and hotel rewards card. Upon completion of a stay, if you are unsure whether this has occurred, please double check with hotel reception to ensure that the transference has been made. If any special arrangements for the hotel bill are needed, please convey this to the staff member prior to the visit.

Effective Visit Preparation

By Billie Joy Langston

You receive the invitation e-mail from a travel coordinator to participate in an evaluation visit. You confirm your availability and agree to conduct the ACICS site visit. A second e-mail arrives officially accepting you on the team. Shortly thereafter, the visit and team memos appear in your inbox. You go online to book your travel at the most economical rate. A few weeks pass and the visit team materials arrive. They await your perusal. Now the reality of your role as a team member soon to conduct an accreditation review settles in and you think: "How can I be an effective evaluator?"

Most accreditation experts will tell you that preparing for the visit, in advance, is the single most important task involved. As an evaluator, you have accepted responsibility to review a particular area of the institution. With that responsibility, there is an inherent commitment to review and study the Self-Study/Branch Application/New Program Application, etc. Having a good working knowledge of your specialty area at this particular institution prior to the visit will contribute to the flow of the review process and subsequent discussions with faculty, staff, and fellow team members. It may be helpful to note specific staff and faculty members that you will need to interview. Plus, with the class schedule handy, you have the ability to plan your day accordingly—such as when to observe classes, when to interview members of the institution, and when to review documentation.

Once familiar with your section of the materials, you can also create a personal checklist of items to take on the visit. This list would include laptop; flash drive; favorite pen; sample interview questions for faculty, students, and program chairs; a copy of the latest *The Evaluator* newsletter; and any concerns you have identified in your specialty area and/or about the institution in general. In addition, remember to examine

and bring along an updated copy of the report template from www.acics.org.

Now you are ready to pack and leave for the airport. Before assembling your attire, be sure to check the 10-day forecast in the city you are visiting. Check your ground transportation reservations and arrangements to ensure that you have a ride to the hotel upon arrival at the airport (unless arranged already by the coordinator).

As you board the plane for your next visit, you'll know that you've done your homework. What a great feeling! Enjoy the winter cycle!



"...create a personal checklist of items to take on the visit. This list would include laptop; flash drive; favorite pen; sample interview questions...a copy of the latest The Evaluator newsletter; any concerns you have identified in your specialty area and/or about the institution in general...[and] an updated copy of the report template."

The Aftermath

The staff coordinator and/or chair have warmed up the bus, you've grabbed the handles of your roller bags, and you're scampering out the door of the most recent visit. *What do you do now?* Aside from riding idly through the scenery of the American heartland you've come to know and know again, there are a few matters ACICS would like you to keep in mind after a visit.

First and foremost, as your pocketbooks know all too well, remember to input your expenses for reimbursement. As previously stated in this publication, we are using our reimbursement software, Concur, and still requiring original receipts.

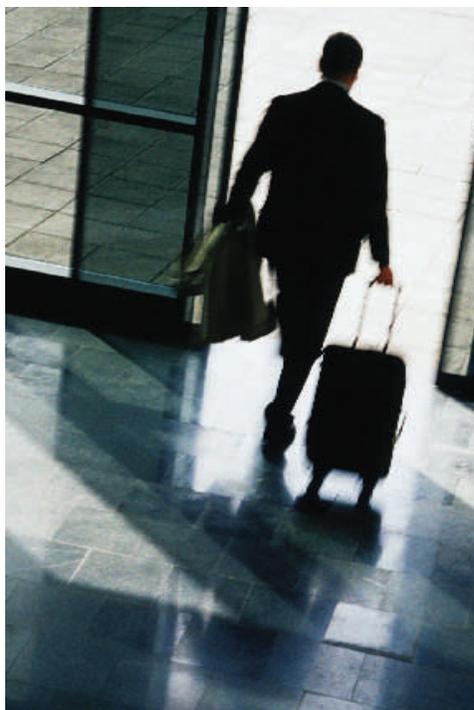
However, there are other ACICS responsibilities in your post-visit life. (We couldn't let you get back to your day job that quickly.) Please remember to hold on to your visit materials. After the read-through has wrapped up, many evaluators dump the self-studies in the nearest trashcan of the team room. If at all possible, we urge evaluators to hold on to this information, particularly if you've noted anything of importance. Note: the method to which you are receiving the self-studies and applications is changing. Therefore, in the near future, ACICS envisions that holding on to these materials will be as weightless as a flash drive in your front pocket. Furthermore,

on that very same flash drive, you can keep a copy of your completed report section and any relevant notes until the school has gone through its Council decision. In the case of any technical trouble with the report or the staff coordinator needs supplemental information during the post-cycle process. Speaking of the Council decision, many evaluators have expressed interest in the ultimate decision deemed after Council review.

We would ask that you check our Web site under *Commission Actions* where we publicize all institution actions that have occurred during each meeting.

ACICS thanks evaluators for the dedication involved in completing each report. The report template and the information contained within are proprietary to ACICS and thus shall not be shared with others. For any purpose (e.g. professional development, thesis paper, etc.) in which you would like to refer to a completed ACICS report, please contact Ms. Susan Greer, Senior Manager.

A primary benefit to serving as an evaluator is best practices and knowledge that can be obtained on a site visit. We encourage all evaluators to utilize any constructive ideas found during a site visit at your home campuses. However, specific information observed on campuses, like the report itself, are proprietary. Please be careful not to discuss any sensitive information about a visit with colleagues or friends.



Stories from the Road

The Evaluator is pleased to once again bring you our “Stories from the Road” segment.

A Diff'rent Kind of School

By Robert Hendrickson

The Douglas Education Center (DEC) was founded in Monessen, Pennsylvania during the industrial-boom of the early 1900's. Locals used DEC to learn the business skills to work in the local industry. When the Steel Towns of the Monongahela gave way to the Rust Belt in the 1970's and 80's, DEC had two choices, adapt or die—they chose both!

The Mon Valley has been the backdrop for horror films dating back to “Night of the Living Dead” in 1968. However, making zombie films far from Hollywood requires dozens of skilled make-up artists to transform hundreds of willing extras into an army of the undead. To this end, Tom Savini, the special effects artist behind the Friday the 13th, Creep Show, and Romero's “Dead” sequels, reached out to his friend Jeffrey Imbrescia, president of DEC for help.

In 2000, DEC unveiled the Tom Savini's Special Make-up Effects Program, and it quickly became the number one program on campus.

Fans from around the world come to Monessen to learn special effects from the man who invented the splatter-genre. Students serve as extras in the zombie pictures, while their peers apply the gore, then the next day they change places, creating a valuable experience for all.

DEC was visited by ACICS for their reevaluation this past cycle, and they pulled out the stops to greet the team with mangled faces and gushing blood. The team was impressed with the facilities and program delivery. Best of all there were no smoke and mirrors when it came to the administration of the programs. It is a shame that they might not be visited again for eight years, but evidence of their excellence will be coming soon to a theatre near you.

Snow Scraping

By Pam Bennett

In honor of Terry Campbell's reign as Evaluator of the Year and the upcoming winter cycle, I thought I would share a story. Anyone who has worked with Terry knows what a nice guy he is so you won't be at all surprised to learn that he offered to clean off our team car the morning after a snow storm. I told him it was that “red one” just outside the door of the hotel. So in his suit and leather shoes – Florida



guys don't own overcoats or boots – he proceeded out into the frigid morning armed with a towel since this Texas gal forgot to ask the rental company for a snow brush.

After the team and myself waited in the warm hotel lobby for as long as possible, I approached the now clean red car and pressed the remote door lock; but to our surprise, the snow-covered car next to the freshly cleaned car beeped. It seems that there were two red cars parked side-by-side, and the wrong one had been cleaned off! I was mortified, but in his usual low-key way, Terry continued to smile and proceeded to wipe off his second “red” car of the day!

This article relies on submissions from staff and evaluators. If you wish, please share one of your “stories from the road” with our Evaluator Management Team for possible inclusion in the next newsletter. Please send any submissions to iharazduk@acics.org.

Chair Training Attendees

ACICS acknowledges the following new chairs that attended ACICS Chair Training at our office in Washington, D.C. on November 20, 2009. Thank you all for taking on this vital role in the accreditation process.

Richard Brubaker	William Fox	Kim Peck
Cathy Eberhart	John Kushner	Bruce Stirewalt
Michele Ernst	Dianna Murphy	Joyce Strout
George Fakhoury	David Parmenter	William Worth

Loren Truschel's Departure

Dear Evaluators,

It is bittersweet to tell all of you, one of the most valuable pieces in the accreditation puzzle, that I have left ACICS to pursue a new adventure with Corinthian Colleges, Inc. Over the past five years, I have met some of the most extraordinary, if not most interesting, individuals and have had some of the greatest, if not most memorable, moments. I will hold these memories dear, but hope and know that our paths will eventually cross again. I wish all of you nothing but the best and know that you have been left in excellent hands with the current travel staff.

Warm regards,
Loren



Evaluator Training Workshop Participants

ACICS acknowledges the following new evaluators. These individuals attended an Evaluator Training Workshop since our last issue. Thank you.

Oluyemi Awolola	Richard Drent	Alesia Henry	Joel Nelson	Julia Smetanka
Julie Blake	John Euliano	Randy Holley	Brian Niedzwiecki	David Sohn
Jan Bruml	Anthony Falls	Lori Houlihan	Joan Oliveto	Aleksandar Stevanovic
Charles Bunbury	Chas Feller	Rob Karney	Erika O'Quinn	Shea Terracin
Laura Carnaghi	David Fritz	Paul Kepic	Donna Payne	Dorothy Thomas
Seon Cho	Lewis Gach	Melissa Lurie	Sandra Perez	Demario Vaughn
Darell Crawford	Rene Gore	Stephanie Mitchell	Sheron Persad	Jorge Velasquez
Heather Davis	Christopher Greene	Brenda Nash	Lisa Ruud	Maura Wilson
Chrisanthi Diamantopoulos	Melissa Hartman			

The Evaluator staff thanks all those who provide editorial and contextual feedback. I would like to pay special thanks to those who have contributed articles for this issue. The Evaluator is primarily maintained by Ian Harazduk, Evaluator Coordinator, any questions or concerns about the publication may be directed to him at iharazduk@acics.org.