

## **THE DISTRIBUTED ENTERPRISE**

### **ACICS Fact Sheet**

#### **WHAT IS IT?**

A distributed enterprise is an institution that provides educational programs at multiple locations operating within the context of an administrative system. Educational activities are developed at one location and distributed by the enterprise to multiple locations through on-ground and on-line delivery systems.

#### **WHO WILL QUALIFY?**

Institutions that can demonstrate a well-established and highly-centralized system for controlling the quality of education across all its campuses will qualify as distributed enterprises. These qualifications include:

- 10 years of continuous accreditation
- A main campus and at least 3 additional locations that have been accredited by ACICS for at least the last 4 years
- A centralized system for controlling the quality of educational activities across all campuses, including
  - Academic programs, faculty and support
  - Student services
  - Instructional resources and facilities
  - Long-range planning, including expansion and growth
  - Financial stability

#### **HOW WILL ACCREDITATION IMPROVE?**

Accreditation will improve in several ways for institutions that qualify.

1. For the first time, these institutions will be evaluated as coordinated systems instead of as collections of unrelated campuses. These large organizations and their impact on the quality of education will be leveraged to strengthen accreditation rather than be ignored.
2. A new level of evaluation will be added to the process – direct evaluation of the central administration to ensure it has the capability of maintaining quality across all campuses.
3. A new source of evaluation will be added to the process. Enterprises will be required to regularly evaluate and ensure compliance with ACICS standards on all campuses.
4. The redundancies and inconsistencies that result from ignoring the centralized administrative structure of this business model will be eliminated.
5. The current system of evaluating individual campuses will be retained as a fall-back, fail safe option, should a particular enterprise prove incapable of controlling the quality of its campuses.

#### **HOW WILL OTHERS BENEFIT?**

All stakeholders in career education will benefit from accreditation of this new business model.

- Students will benefit from a consistent level of quality education across all campuses.
- States will benefit from the scaling up of quality education for their workforces.
- Distributed enterprises will benefit from an accreditation process better aligned with their organizational structures.
- All multiple-campus member institutions will benefit from new procedures for the coordinated evaluation of common catalogs, policies, programs and program changes.
- ACICS will benefit from a more effective and efficient allocation of staff resources.

## **HOW WILL THE DISTRIBUTED ENTERPRISE BE IMPLEMENTED?**

The Council has approved the distributed enterprise in concept and has proposed a revised set of criteria for review and comment by members.

- Comments will be reviewed and the proposed criteria will be considered for final approval at the August 2010 Council meeting.
- Beta test institutions will be selected and self-studies will be developed during the fall of 2010.
- Evaluation visits to test institutions will occur in the Winter 2011 visit cycle.
- Preliminary results of the Beta test, including institution applications will be considered at the April 2011 Council meeting.
- Refinements to the process and any resulting modifications to institutional applications are expected during Spring 2011, and final approval of the process and test institution applications is expected at the August 2011 Council meeting.

## **WHEN CAN ALL INSTITUTIONS APPLY?**

Classification as a distributed enterprise is voluntary. The new criteria will be effective as of January 2011, and institutions may apply at that time for classification. Consideration of applications will begin immediately following the conclusion of the Beta Test, which is expected to occur in August 2011.