## *Accreditation Criteria* Changes

The following criteria have been recently reviewed and have been accepted as final by the Council: (The underlined portions are newly added language and the ~~struck through~~ portions are deleted language).

**A. Distance Education**
**GLOSSARY**
**Distance Education or Distance Learning.** A structured educational situation in which the instructors and learners are separated by time and location. Distance ~~learning is characterized by (1) separation of place and/or time~~ education supports regular and substantive interaction synchronously and asynchronously, between instructor and learner, among learners, and/or between learners and learning resources through one or more interactive technologies.~~; and (2) connectivity, interaction, and engagement between the learner and instructor, among learners, and between learners and learning resources conducted through one or more media.~~ The technologies may include the following: the internet; interactive transmissions through broadcast, closed circuit, cable, satellite, or wireless communications devices; and two-way audio or videoconferencing.

**APPENDIX H    Principles and Guidelines for Nontraditional Education**
**Admissions Requirements and Enrollment**
a. Institutions must identify…
b. If an on-line admissions test is required, it must be administered in a manner which verifies the student's identity. Institutions must make it clear in writing at the time of enrollment how the student's identity will be verified throughout the course and program, how the student's privacy will be protected, and if the student will be assessed any additional charges associated with the verification of student identity.
**Curriculum Content and Instruction and Delivery**
e. Institutions must demonstrate that the student who registers for a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The verification method, at the option of the institution, may include a secure login and pass code, proctored examinations, and other appropriate student authentication or verification technology.

**B. TRANSFER OF CREDIT**
**3-1-413. Transfer of Credit.** An institution shall evaluate and consider awarding proper academic credit for credits earned at institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education. The institution shall establish and adhere to a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit for those courses that satisfy current program course requirements. Written policies and procedures must clearly outline the process by which transfer of academic credit is awarded. The institution shall make public its policies on transfer of credit, including a statement of the criteria established by the institution by which a determination is made with regard to accepting credits from another institution.



Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
**Accreditation Criteria**
**Policies, Procedures, and Standards**

*Effective August 2010*

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The updated *Accreditation Criteria* is available on the Web site. The subsequent version of *The Evaluator* will include criteria accepted as final and effective before January 1, 2010. Please review the Memorandum to the Field posted on our Web site to gather further explanation on all changes to the Criteria. For any questions, you may contact a member of the travel staff, or Ms. Terron King at tking@acics.org.

## Message from the Executive Director

In the next 12 – 18 months, ACICS will undergo the process of re-recognition by the U.S. Department of Education and CHEA. Recognition review brings heightened attention on our agency from external organizations. ACICS is proud of the standards it publishes and enforces, and of the evaluators who make those standards viable. ACICS has a qualified, skilled, and dedicated cadre of evaluators; and we encourage you, as volunteers of our organization, to continue your efforts to enforce quality assurance and promote quality enhancement at all of our institutions. You will find in this publication specific modifications to our current procedures which include updated report templates, recent changes to our *Accreditation Criteria*, and progression of our online Evaluator Workshop. ACICS thanks you for your time and your service to support our mission.

Sincerely,

*Al*

## ACICS in the News

ACICS' primary focus is to enforce strong standards of quality at the colleges and schools holding grants of our accreditation. In order to retain recognition from the U.S. Department of Education, ACICS must undergo scrutiny and examination. With such an imperative mission, it is appropriate and reasonable to expect and withstand such scrutiny.

Recent publicity regarding some ACICS accredited institutions has raised the stakes of the accreditation program. The high-profile scrutiny comes at an opportune time, because ACICS is beginning the re-recognition process in front of the U.S. Department of Education and by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The mission, policies, and procedures will be formally evaluated by these agencies before our current recognition expires in 2011. The Council welcomes the opportunity to strengthen the quality and integrity of institutions holding the ACICS grant of accreditation.

Hearings in the U.S. Senate and recent media coverage show that external stakeholders expect accrediting entities to have a strong role in stopping unacceptable practices, specifically those relating to recruitment, admission, and enrollment of students. If you are interested in reading the Government Accountability Office report or listening to the taped hearings in the U.S. Senate, you may find them at the links provided.

The ACICS *Accreditation Criteria*, along with evaluator templates and training materials, provide site visit teams with appropriate tools to identify and document non-compliant practices. ACICS has initiated procedures that will reinforce with our institutions the required compliance with all of our standards, including those that relate to recruitment and admission of students. ACICS evaluators are an integral part of the accreditation process and resources that make compliance recurring, reliable, and compulsory.

> *"The ACICS Accreditation Criteria, along with evaluator templates and training materials, provide site visit teams with appropriate tools to identify and document non-compliant practices."*

## Departmental Changes

Since the Spring 2010 issue ACICS, and particularly the Campus Development department, have undergone a number of changes. Friendly faces have assumed managerial positions: Ms. Jocelyn Harris, Manager, Institutional Services; Ms. Susan Greer, Senior Manager, Operations Management; Ms. Jennifer Gwatkin, Manager, Institutional Quality Assurance Management; and Ms. Perliter Walters-Gilliam, Manager, New Institutional Development.

For purposes of our evaluator pool, it is worth noting that Ms. Susan Greer maintains the ultimate management over the ACICS Evaluator Program. Although, supporting Susan in day-to-day operations which involve questions regarding the Evaluator Program, technical support, new applicants, vetting, and others areas as necessary will be Mr. Ian Harazduk, Senior Accreditation Coordinator. In addition, Ms. Tabitha Harley, Accounting Assistant, or the ACICS travel staff member managing your visit are available to answer questions regarding specific reimbursements. Therefore, Ian will be the initial contact for evaluators for all issues unrelated to a specific visit, and you may contact him at iharazduk@acics.org or (202) 336-6795. Please continue to contact your travel staff member if you have questions regarding a specific visit that you are conducting. Be sure to secure the phone number and e-mail of the travel staff member who is conducting the visit prior to the visit date in case you have questions.

## Helpful Reminders

### REPORT TEMPLATES

Before you get to work on those report templates, please double-check the version. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we're making additional revisions to Sections 1 – 10 of the New Grant/Branch Inclusion/Initial Grant Report templates. As such, you should be using **VER. September 1, 2010** located on our Web site under the **Evaluators** tab and the **Report Templates** link. Some substantive changes have been made, so please make sure to read the questions for your section prior to the visit.

### REIMBURSEMENT DEADLINE

Remember that original receipts are due in the office within 60 days after the visit\ We are unable to begin review of expense reports until the original receipts are received. If you have any issues regarding reimbursements, please feel free to contact your ACICS travel staff member or Ms. Tabitha Harley at tharley@acics.org.

# Going the Distance

*By Billie Joy Langston*

ACICS is on the move to continue its efforts to be recognized as the premier national accreditation agency that is also technologically savvy and on the cutting edge of modern business practices. With plans underway to become a 21st century paperless office, ACICS is a leader in utilizing technological enhancements to further its mission to provide a quality accreditation review process. Most recently, significant progress has been achieved with the planning and implementation of evaluation visits to fully online institutions.

Currently, ACICS provides institutional accreditation to numerous campuses nationwide that operate solely online. Students are enrolled online, and consequently, evaluation visits are conducted using an online approach that is consistent with the true spirit of distance education. Evaluation visits to these institutions are conducted with on-site evaluators and remote program specialists. The standard elements of the evaluation process are completely online, which includes e-chat with students and faculty.

Evaluators with five years experience in online instruction, management, and curriculum development, please feel free to contact us for consideration as a Distance Education Evaluator. In addition, program specialists who have strong technology skills and are interested in participating in online visits; we want to hear from you. Don't hesitate to send your resume to evaluatormanager@acics.org for consideration within these specialties in the evaluator pool.

Whether you represent one of our member institutions or you're a longtime educator, ACICS is going the distance for you!

# ACICS, Technology, and You

*By Sarah Parsons*

No matter how much we protest, technology is taking over. ACICS has embraced the technological revolution and is on a path towards a more integrated, paperless, and streamlined accreditation process. Technology has and will allow further efficiency in relation to submitting expenses, communicating critical, up-to-the-minute visit information, and performing successful on-site evaluations. At times, we all struggle, gripe about, and possibly long for the days of handwritten letters and phone calls (not text messages); nonetheless, we must accept that e-books and flash drives are here to stay. ACICS understands that learning a new technology can be an arduous process; however, we must stress that the systems in place are critical to our continual functionality. We do not expect perfection in this aspect, but we expect an honest effort be made to heighten your technological acumen as it relates to ACICS procedures.

Evaluators play a key role in our mission and it is vital that you are all aware of our current policies and procedures. Those who have difficul-



ties with our report templates, take time to practice with the documents at home. It is also easiest if you are able to bring your own laptop on visits. This is certainly not required, but it is advantageous since you are most familiar with your own computer. Being aware and knowledgeable of our technology will make your pre-visit, visit, and post-visit experiences much smoother and more enjoyable. ACICS encourages you to ask any questions that you may have about our procedures or systems. In addition, we encourage you to further familiarize yourself with our report templates, Web site, and electronic reimbursement system as we gear up for the Fall cycle!

# Request for Evaluator Referrals

Each year ACICS conducts over 700 visits at over 350 different institutions. These efforts require a significant amount of volunteers, and we are thankful to have such an assiduous assortment of evaluators. However, in certain specialty fields, ACICS has an opportunity to bolster its pool of experts. ACICS requests your assistance in referring friends, colleagues, and associates that could volunteer in the following programmatic areas:

- Information Systems Security
- Surgical Technician
- Pharmacy Assistant
- Paralegal
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Massage Therapy
- Medical Coding and Billing
- Dental Assistant
- Criminal Justice
- Health Information Technology
- Biomedical Technician
- Court Reporting

Please note that ACICS has guidelines for evaluator requirements which include five years of experience as well as formal education in the specialty area. Evaluator applicants must complete and send in three specific documents: a current resume, an Independent Contractor Agreement and Canons, and a W-9. In addition, they must participate in the online training which consists of three self-paced recorded modules that provide an overview of ACICS and evaluator responsibilities; and a two-hour live webinar recapping and discussing the Evaluator Program.

Please refer potential evaluators to our Web site at Becoming an Evaluator for the entire application process. Any questions regarding this process of the program as a whole may be sent to evaluatormanager@acics.org.

# Stories from the Road

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

### Sweltering Cycle
*By Christine Kiely*

ACICS needs to change the name from the Spring cycle to the Summer cycle (I don't care that Summer starts in late June). Here's my story: delayed flying in and flying out of the visit. Two hours each time. Ho-Hum. No surprise, right. Well, get this, after two hours waiting at the gate on the way home, the powers-that-be finally allowed us to board the plane. We get seated, we get settled, we stuff our bags in the tiny little compartments, we buckle up, and we wait. And then, the flight attendant gets on the horn to say: "We don't have any pilots." *Pause for dramatic effect.* "And they are the only ones that can turn on the air conditioning. So please take out your safety card, read it carefully, and then fan yourself with it." After a chuckle, 45 minutes, and three shirt changes (just kidding), the pilots arrived to flick on the A/C and fly us safely home. Phew.

### Back Left Tire
*By Lindsey Withem*

As a new coordinator, I was nervous about a lot of things on my first full-team visit. As the first day went by smoothly, I started to relax and even enjoy my new job. Leaving the institution was a huge relief and I was sure that my carefully executed dinner plans would be as successful as my day's work. The twelve person team piled into two minivans; I pulled out of the parking space and drove towards the exit when I felt and heard the back left tire of my van run over a small object. My heart rate immediately spiked. Fearing that I had either damaged private property or killed a small animal, I slowly drove forward until I saw a bright orange rubber parking cone, undamaged, in my rearview mirror. A sigh of relief escaped and I continued the drive to dinner.

I thought perhaps the incident would be forgotten and the night would move on as if it never happened. I quickly learned that doesn't happen on ACICS visits. The other minivan witnessed the entire event and found it quite humorous. Before the end of the visit, I returned to the team room to find a bright orange parking cone on my laptop signed by all the team members. I keep the cone in the corner of my workspace and it not only reminds me to double check my back tires before leaving an institution, but it also makes me anxious to get back on the road again.

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.

# Staff Evaluations

*By Perliter Walters-Gilliam*

An initiative is underway to improve training and professional development for ACICS travel coordinators, whom play a critical role in the accreditation process. A majority of this role is accomplished through interaction with the evaluators; ACICS believes that an integral part of the initiative is feedback that only you can provide. Hence, candid and sincere evaluations with the objective to both encourage and guide all travel staff is being solicited. These are **completely anonymous** and will not affect your relationship with us. We value your expertise at the institution and your experience with the process and hope that you will support us in the development of our staff, the success of our institutions, and the betterment of the organization.

Please complete the form for every coordinator with whom you will work with during the cycle: http://www.acics.org/evaluators/forms.aspx?ekfrm=2886.

# Evaluator Training Workshop Participants

ACICS has successfully completed two more online Evaluator Training Workshops. The workshop consists of three pre-recorded modules and one live two-hour webinar. The live webinar is reserved for new evaluators who have completed the first three modules and is by invitation only. Please remember that the three pre-recorded sessions may be viewed by any and all evaluators. They are divided into separate sections that consist of 1) ACICS overview; 2) visit responsibilities; and 3) visit activities and exercises. Please take a gander at these modules on the ACICS Website under the **Events/Workshops** tab and the **Webinars** link. ACICS would also like to acknowledge the following new evaluators. These individuals attended an Evaluator Training Workshop since our last issue. Thank you.

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kudbettin Aksoy | Michelle Courtis | Jan Gordon | Mary Laffrey | Ozgur Ozer |
| Alaric Barber | Raj Desai | Susan Gorman | Michael Maki | Terry Roach |
| David Becker | Harpal Dhillon | Keith Grant | Stephen Malvo | George Strothmann |
| Sarah Bjorstrom | Hector Duenas | Ron Herbes | Joy Meoak | Joshua Swayne |
| Charlotte Brinneman | David Eastman | Ruth Ann Holtmann | Zach Miller | Anthony Trongone |
| Gwendolyn Brown | Michelle Edwards | Susan Hyde | Stephanie Mitchell | Dave Waldron |
| Mark Buch | Ziad Fadel | Pamela Jacob | Cyndee Moore | |
| Tabitha Casey | Gladys Flecha Delgado | Christopher Johnson | Suzanne Morrison-Williams | |
| Julia Clark | Vince DeRita | Lori Johnston | Jennifer Nolan | |
| Anna Counts | Dennis Gnage | Sachin Koshy | Joanne O'Donnell | |