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| **Bob Pacheco bob@assessmentcommons.org**[**via**](https://support.google.com/mail/answer/1311182?hl=en)**listserv.cccnext.net** |

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Folks,

A Happy Mardi Gras to you all.

Thank you so very much for the responses on the new '18-month reaffirmation,' which, as we will see, this is an inaccurate moniker.

There is indeed a new policy that addresses, not only actions on accredited institutions, but also for those seeking initial candidacy. I have attached the policy for your own reading and evaluation.  Visiting teams are now trained on the policy and boots on the ground are now reading the action letters, making headway and putting plans in place.

While the issue which precipitated the posts was the '18-month reaffirmation' that virtually all colleges received this past go 'round, I would like to direct you to a couple of key sections in the policy.  In  the "Other Actions on Institutions,” section (the document is not paginated), the Commission points out other steps possible including deferring action on the college and requiring a report and site visit to verify compliance.  (I did some consulting work over the holidays for a college that had an action deferred until other information and evidence was supplied.)  The Commission was very cooperative in that process.

The new policy also states that site teams may note, in the evaluation reports, colleges exceeding the standards, highlighting the effective practices in place at the institution. Finally, there is a "Definitions" section in the policy that clarifies the two types of recommendations ("to improve'" and "to meet").  The definitions include a one-time, good cause extension for colleges who have done everything within their 'authority' to comply with the standards within the time allotted by the Commission.

As to the '18-month reaffirmation,' indeed, the commission has two forms of reaffirmation; a) full and b) reaffirmation with a requirement of a follow-up report (with or without a visit).  For colleges in "substantial compliance" with the standards, the Commission will specify issues that the institution must address and set a time period to respond "up to" 18 months, but generally one year. At recent trainings, we were told that there was no 'substantially' meeting the standard; you either did or you did not. So, this is a change. Colleges who remove the deficiencies within the Commission period will be reaffirmed for the remainder of the 7-year cycle.

This policy marks a significant pivot for the Commission with attendant benefits for the colleges and the Commission itself.  First, this reaffirmation process provides colleges a window of time to make improvements in a more natural setting, rather than operating in a damage control mindset (the possible one-year time period notwithstanding).  Yet, there also seems to be an ancillary benefit to the Commission since the "reaffirmation with follow-up report" may reduce, de facto, the number and use of sanctions after visits as well as some of the criticisms of the Commission has received in the press and in other venues.

Some accreditation purists might disagree, arguing that colleges warranting a sanction are separate and distinct from colleges in substantial compliance.

In any event, the policy seems to provide a way for colleges to act more organically to improve its processes and structures while removing some of the external distractions to our meeting the pledge of academic quality.

From snowy Washington, D.C.,

Bob
Robert Pacheco, Ed.D.
Moderator
Assessment Chair, RP Group

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