



Accreditation and Community College Trustees

Association of Community College Trustees

Community College Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT)

2018 Annual Conference

June 2, 2018

Major Takeaways for Community College Trustees

- ✓ Know what accreditation is, how it operates, what it means for your college
- ✓ Know the roles of trustees, including:
 - ✓ Trustee involvement in the accreditation process
 - ✓ Trustee use of the accreditation opportunity to further explore effective governance
 - ✓ Trustee use of the accreditation opportunity to build the college's future

Questions for Community College Trustees

- ✓ What is the organization, purpose, and role of accreditation?
- ✓ How does accreditation work?
- ✓ What is the role of trustees in accreditation?
- ✓ Common interests of trustees and accreditors: How can accreditation contribute to effective board practice in leadership and governance?
- ✓ What are some caveats as trustees work with accreditation?
- ✓ How can trustees make use of accreditation as they build a college's future?

Purpose of Accreditation

“The purpose of accreditation is to assure and improve academic quality in higher education.”

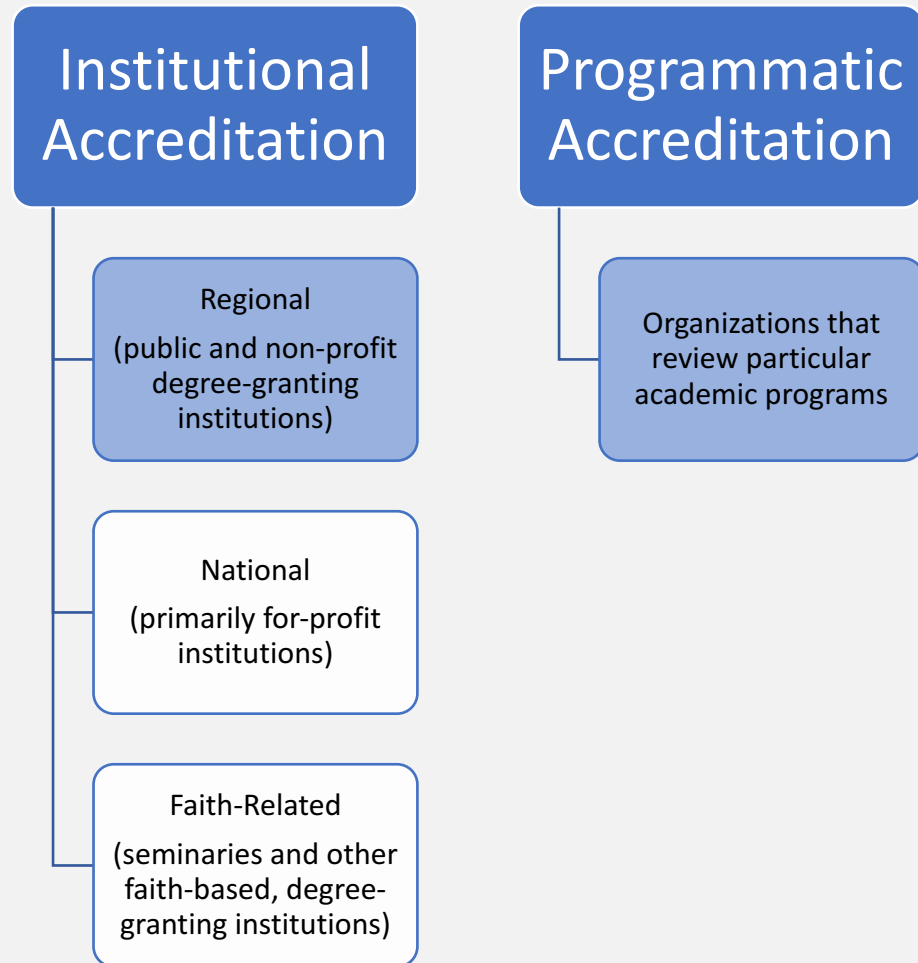
Dr. Judith Eaton

President, Council for Higher Education Accreditation

Roles of Accreditation

- Affirm the **academic legitimacy** of a college
- Sustain **public confidence** in a college
- Facilitate **student mobility** (transfer to other institutions and recognition by employers)
- Promote **continuous improvement** of colleges
- Provide **eligibility for funding** from public and private sources (in particular, federal student financial aid and state funding)

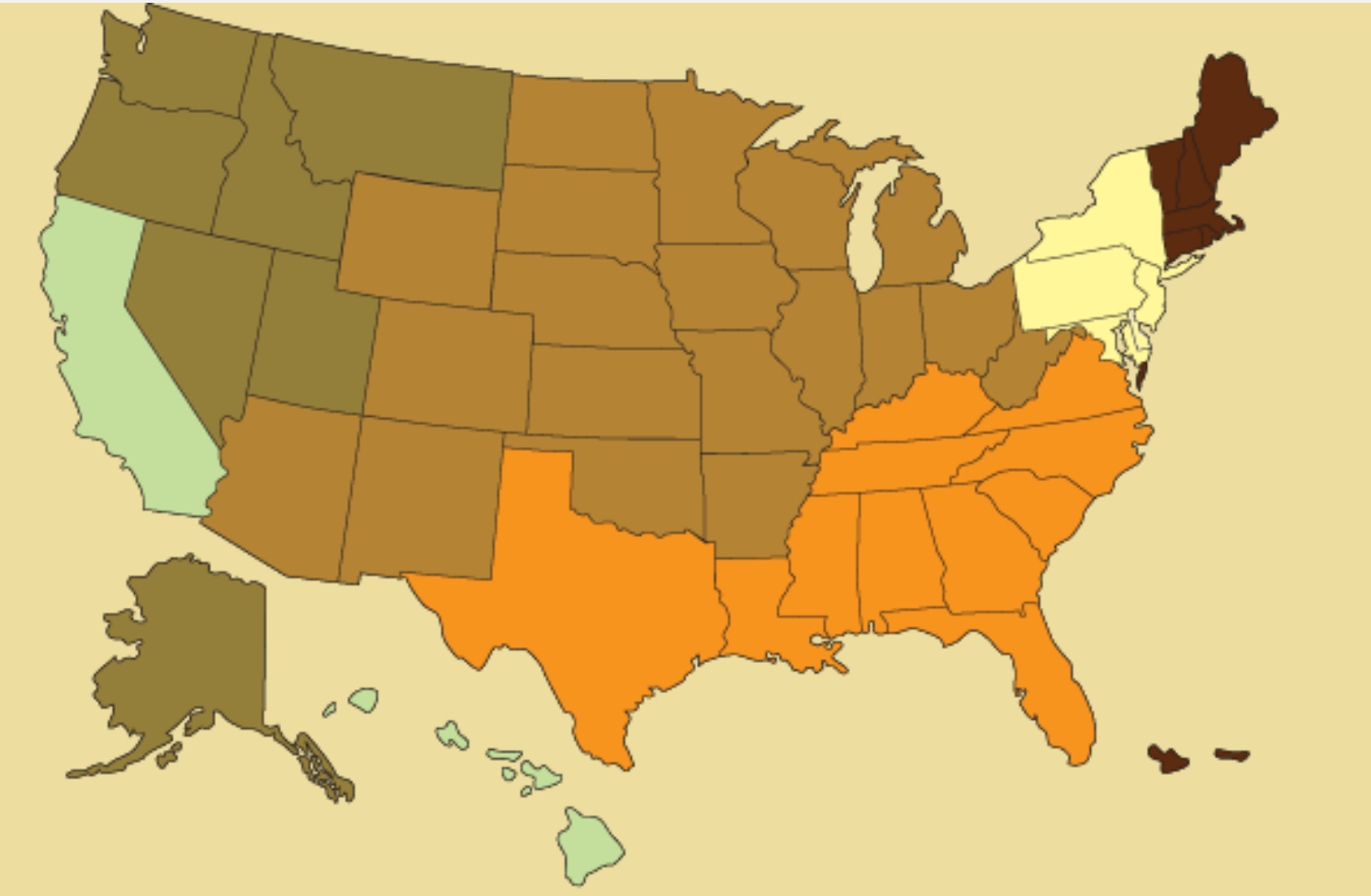
Types of Accreditation



Two major types of accreditation:

1. **Institutional** accreditation that reviews the entire college— *regional accreditors review community colleges*
2. **Programmatic** accreditation that reviews particular academic programs such as nursing, engineering technology, or business— *most community colleges have accredited programs*

Regional Accreditors



- Northwest Association of Schools & Colleges
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges/Accrediting Commission for Community & Junior Colleges*
- Southern Association of Schools & Colleges
- Higher Learning Commission
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education**
- New England Association of Schools & Colleges

*Includes American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. (Community Colleges are accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community & Junior Colleges (ACCJC))

**Includes Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Institutional Accreditation Process

Regional accreditation typically occurs on a 6 to 10-year cycle.

Step 1: Self-study

- College reviews its operations and prepares a report

Step 2: Peer Review

- Committee of peers review report and visit college

Step 3: Decision

- College may be accredited, accredited with conditions, or denied accreditation

Step 4: Follow-Up

- College acts on accreditor's recommendations and reports on progress

Institutional Accreditation Standards

- Each accreditor has standards that colleges must demonstrate they meet. The standards of the regional accreditors vary, but all include expectations for governance and the governing board. *Trustees should be familiar with the complete set of standards, and well versed in the standards for governance.*
- Other standards typically address institutional mission, academic quality, student learning outcomes, institutional integrity, instructional and student support programs, human resources, and institutional finances among other topics.

Accreditation Outcomes*

Reaffirmation of Accreditation

- Typically accompanied by a request for subsequent reporting on action taken in response to accreditor recommendations and regular reports on the college until the accreditation cycle repeats

Warning or Probation

- Typically accompanied by a series of actions that the college must take to proceed toward accreditation

Show Cause

- The final stage before denial of accreditation requires a college to demonstrate why its accreditation should not be denied

Denial of Accreditation

- Happens rarely because colleges have prior opportunities to rectify the problems identified through the accreditation process

*These outcomes apply to institutions seeking to renew/reaffirm existing accreditation. Somewhat different outcomes apply to institutions seeking accreditation for the first time.

Accreditation can assist trustees in carrying out responsibility for...



Academic
leadership



Financial leadership



Effective college
governance,
including shared
governance

Role of Trustees in the Accreditation Process

Step 1: Self-study

- Review self-study process and report

Step 2: Peer Review

- Meet with peer review team during site visit

Step 3: Decision

- Accompany president to meet with accrediting commission

Step 4: Follow-Up

- Monitor that college responds to accreditor recommendations and request for information

Caveats and Concerns

1

Pay attention to programmatic as well as institutional accreditation, as both demand significant time and effort at a college

2

Examine accreditor recommendations carefully and resist calls to approve major expenditures based solely on “our accreditor said we need to do this”

3

Do not allow accreditor recommendations to usurp board authority, in particular with regard to selection of president/chancellor, approval of academic programs, and relations with faculty, staff, and policy makers

Trustee-Accreditation Partnership to Build a College's Future



Calls for greater
accountability



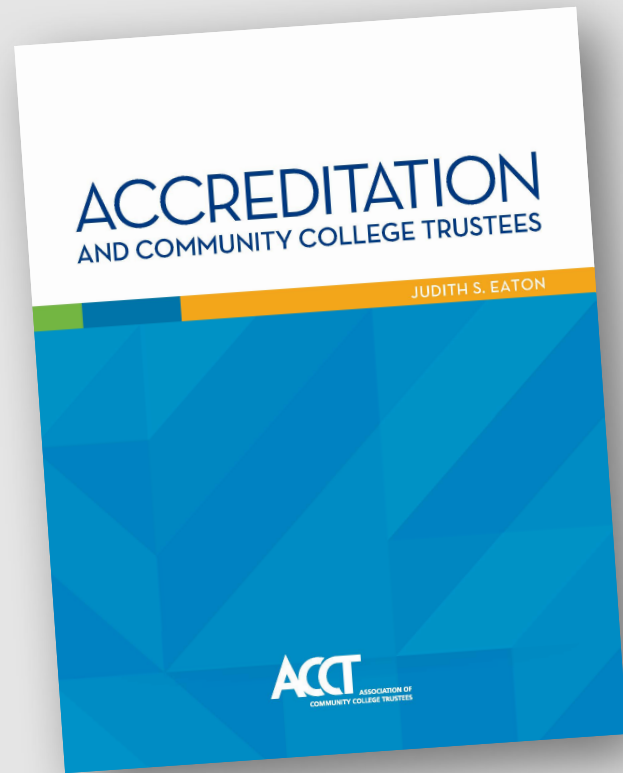
Pressure for
innovation



Limited financial
resources

To prepare for the future, governing boards should view accreditors as institutional **colleagues** and **advisers**.

For More Information



Download free overview of accreditation for community college trustees at www.acct.org.

Other helpful sources:

Council for Higher Education Accreditation: www.chea.org

Western Association of Schools and Colleges/Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges: www.accjc.org

Higher Learning Commission: www.hlcommission.org

Middle States Commission on Higher Education: www.msche.org

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education: cihe.neasc.org

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges: www.sacsoc.org

Northwest Association of Schools & Colleges: www.nwccu.org