

# Accountability and Accreditation



**Community College Association of Texas Trustees**

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*McLennan Community College*





## Trustee/Regent Accountability

“ . . . because they hold their institutions in the public trust, boards . . . are accountable for achieving public purposes. Boards that end up in the headlines for misbehavior often do not violate legal statutes. Instead, they and their institutions lose trust.”

*Inside Higher Ed*

*Making Boards Accountable for Themselves*

**By** Cathy Trower and Peter Eckel December 16, 2016

### Five Essential Areas of Board Responsibility and Accountability

- ▶ Upholding the institution's mission;
- ▶ Selecting, compensating, evaluating and firing the president;
- ▶ Overseeing the fiscal health and integrity of the institution;
- ▶ Overseeing the quality of programs, services and other institutional offerings; and
- ▶ Ensuring the board's own performance and conduct.





# Accreditation and Quality Assurance

*Under the duty of care, governing bodies of colleges and universities are responsible for both the short- and long-term financial health of the institution and achievement of the goal of preserving the institution and its resources for future generations. At the same time, governing boards have the obligation to develop and protect the quality of the institution's academic programs and to become appropriately engaged in the oversight thereof.*

*Gellman-Danley, Barbara. Accreditation and Quality Assurance: A Call to Action. November/December 2017 Issue of Trustees Magazine, Association of Governing Board of Universities and Colleges*



Dr. Barbara Gellman-Danley,  
President,  
Higher Learning Commission





## Types of Accreditation

### Institutional Accreditation

Regional  
(public and non-profit degree-granting institutions)

National  
(primarily for-profit institutions)

Faith-Related  
(seminaries and other faith-based, degree-granting institutions)

### Programmatic Accreditation

Organizations that review particular academic programs



Two major types of accreditation viewed as measures of quality:

1. **Institutional** accreditation that reviews the entire college—regional accreditors review all colleges
2. **Programmatic** accreditation that reviews particular academic programs such as nursing and other health professions, or law enforcement—often required to license graduates

*Congressional Research Service March 23, 2017 and ACCT 2018 Annual Conference*

# McLennan

COMMUNITY

## COLLEGE

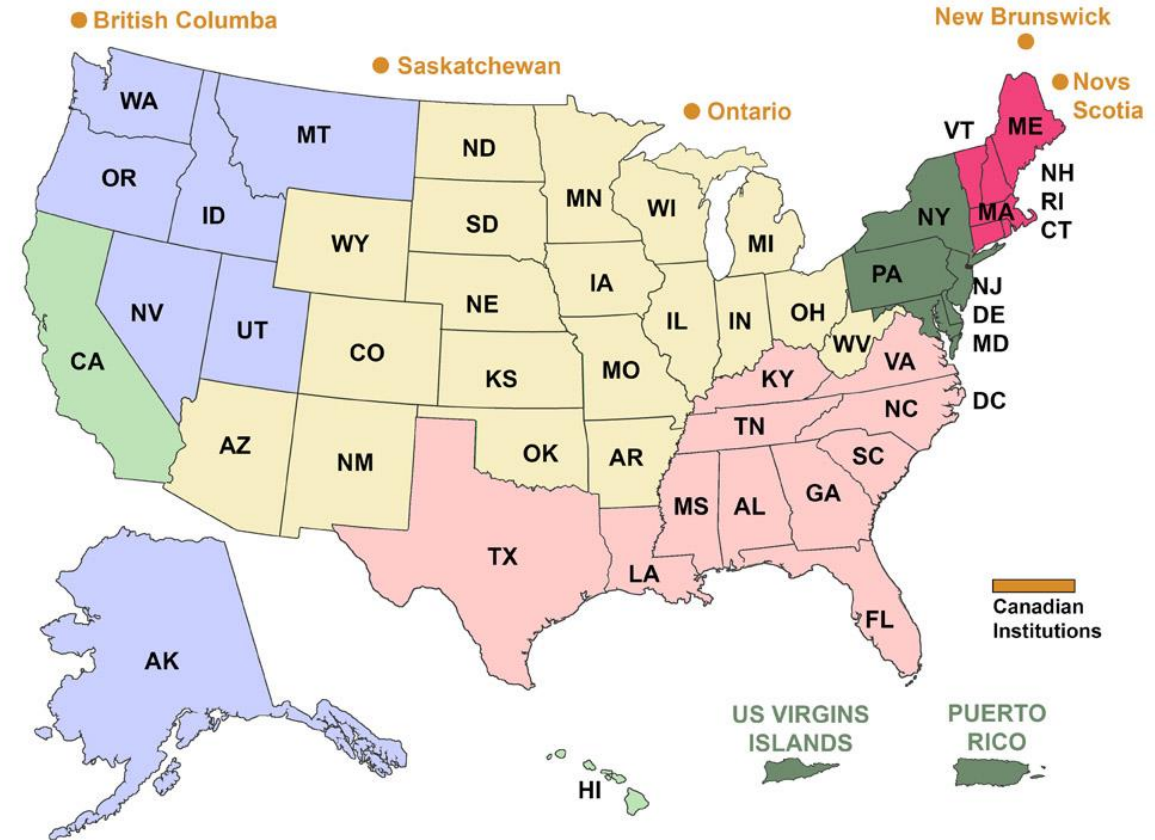
# Regional Accreditation Across the United States

“Accreditation” is review of the quality of higher education institutions and programs. In the United States, accreditation is a major way that students, families, government officials, and the press know that an institution or program provides a quality education.

Council of Higher Education  
Accreditation (CHEA)  
[www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org)



## MAP OF 6 REGIONS OF ACCREDITATION



- MSCHS:** The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- NEASC:** The New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- HLC-NCA:** The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- NWCCU:** The Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities
- SACS:** The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- WASC:** The Western Association of Schools and Colleges





# Roles of Regional 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)



## 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

### Sanctions: 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 to public colleges 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. [www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org) and CCATT 2018 Annual Conference





# SACSCOC Accreditation/Boards

## Section 4: Governing Boards

### ► Responsibilities:

*The institution's governing board holds in trust the **fundamental autonomy** and **ultimate well-being** of the institution. As the corporate body, the board ensures both the **presence of viable leadership** and **strong financial resources** to fulfill the institutional mission. Integral to strong governance is the absence of undue influence from external sources.*



Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Colleges

[www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf](http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf)







# Boards in Trouble with Accreditors

- ▶ Individual Board members with real or perceived conflict of interest
- ▶ Board members crossing the line into administrative “stuff”
- ▶ Boards not attending to the financial issues at the institution
- ▶ Poor communication between Board (primarily Board chair) and college President



*Dr. Belle Wheelan, President,  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Colleges*



## HEADLINES: Proposed New Accreditation Regulations

*These changes, which were developed by consensus from a diverse negotiated rulemaking panel earlier this year, are designed to promote innovation, protect students while ensuring they have access to the higher education options that meet their unique needs, and reduce irrelevant and over burdensome regulations on higher education institutions. Betsy DeVos*

- ▶ *Secretary DeVos Advances Higher Education Reform Forged by Historic Consensus U. S. Department of Education (News Release), June 11, 2019*
- ▶ *How the Education Department Is Proposing to Ease Rules on Accreditation The Chronicle of Higher Education June 11, 2019*
- ▶ *Rewriting the Rule Book for College Accreditors Inside Higher Ed, June 12, 2019*
- ▶ *New Rules Proposed by Betsy DeVos Could Put Students at Risk of Attending Low-Quality Schools, Advocates Say MarketWach, June 12, 2019*



US Secretary of  
Education Betsy DeVos



# Major Takeaways for Community College Governing Boards

- ▶ Reaffirmation of the accountability of the Board for upholding the public's trust
- ▶ Recognition of the importance of regional and programmatic accreditations to the college, the community, and to students
- ▶ Understanding the roles of governing boards in accreditation, including:
  - ▶ Involvement in the accreditation process
  - ▶ Use of the accreditation opportunity to further explore effective governance
  - ▶ Use of the accreditation opportunity to measure quality and to build the college's future



*Eaton, Judith S. (March 2018). Accreditation and Community College Trustees. The Association of Community College Trustees. Washington, D.C.*



# Discussion and Questions

