



**ACCREDITING  
COMMISSION  
for COMMUNITY and  
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association  
of Schools and Colleges*

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May 11, 2015

To: Chief Executive Officers, Accreditation Liaison Officers  
From: Barbara A. Beno *Barbara A. Beno*  
Subject: Response to Senator Lamar Alexander's White Paper on Accreditation

In March, Senator Lamar Alexander, Chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), released a White Paper on Accreditation. The paper was discussed in Higher Education Press and is widely viewed as predicting significant changes in the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

In the last several weeks, the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) and the American Council on Education (ACE) released papers in response to Senator Alexander's paper that the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) signed onto. In addition, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) released a response that ACCJC agrees with but did not sign onto.

Attached please find copies of those three documents. I urge you to read the C-RAC paper, followed by the others as you have time. When legislation is drafted (not likely to occur before September, but possibly later), it will be important for members of Congress to hear from institutional leadership about their views on the ideas/changes suggested in Senator Alexander's paper. If you have occasion to meet with members of Congress, these papers should help you frame comments that could be helpful to preserving peer-based, regional accreditation in the upcoming legislation.

I welcome your reactions to or comments on these papers, or any news you may have of individuals in Congress with whom you have communicated. The Higher Education Act reauthorization will require us to have a community approach to shaping the Act in a manner that preserves and enhances what we value.

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