



ThinkCollege

NATIONAL COORDINATING CENTER

INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION, UMASS BOSTON

National Accreditation Standards for Inclusive Higher Education Programs

Past, Present, & Future

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Think College National Coordinating Center is a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The Center is funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, Grant #P407B15002.

Agenda

- Brief history of accreditation standard development
- Summary of previous work group accomplishments
- Report to Congress 2021
- Recommendations
- New Accreditation Workgroup Plans
- Q & A



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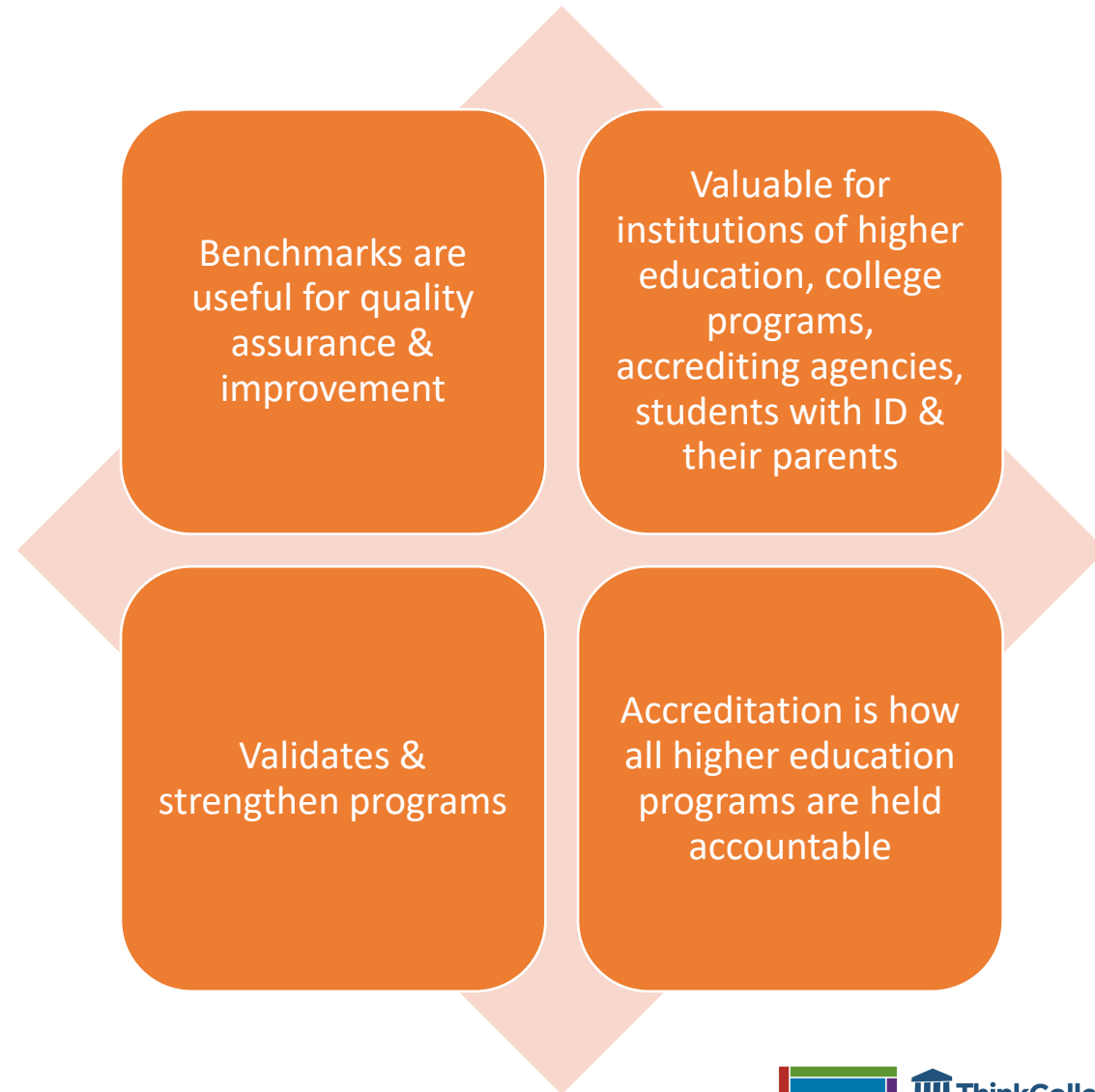
Report on Model Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability: Progress on the Path to Education, Employment, and Community Living

REPORT TO:
United States Secretary of Education
United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor
National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity

The National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup
May 2021



Importance of Program Accreditation



2008

Passage of the HEOA

2011

First Accreditation Workgroup Formed

2012-14

Model Program Standards Developed

2015

Extensive public input sought

2016

First Report to Congress

2017

Field Test of model standards

2018-19

Revisions made based on field test

2019

Accreditation Agency Search

2019

Student Learning Outcomes Committee

2021

Second Report to Congress



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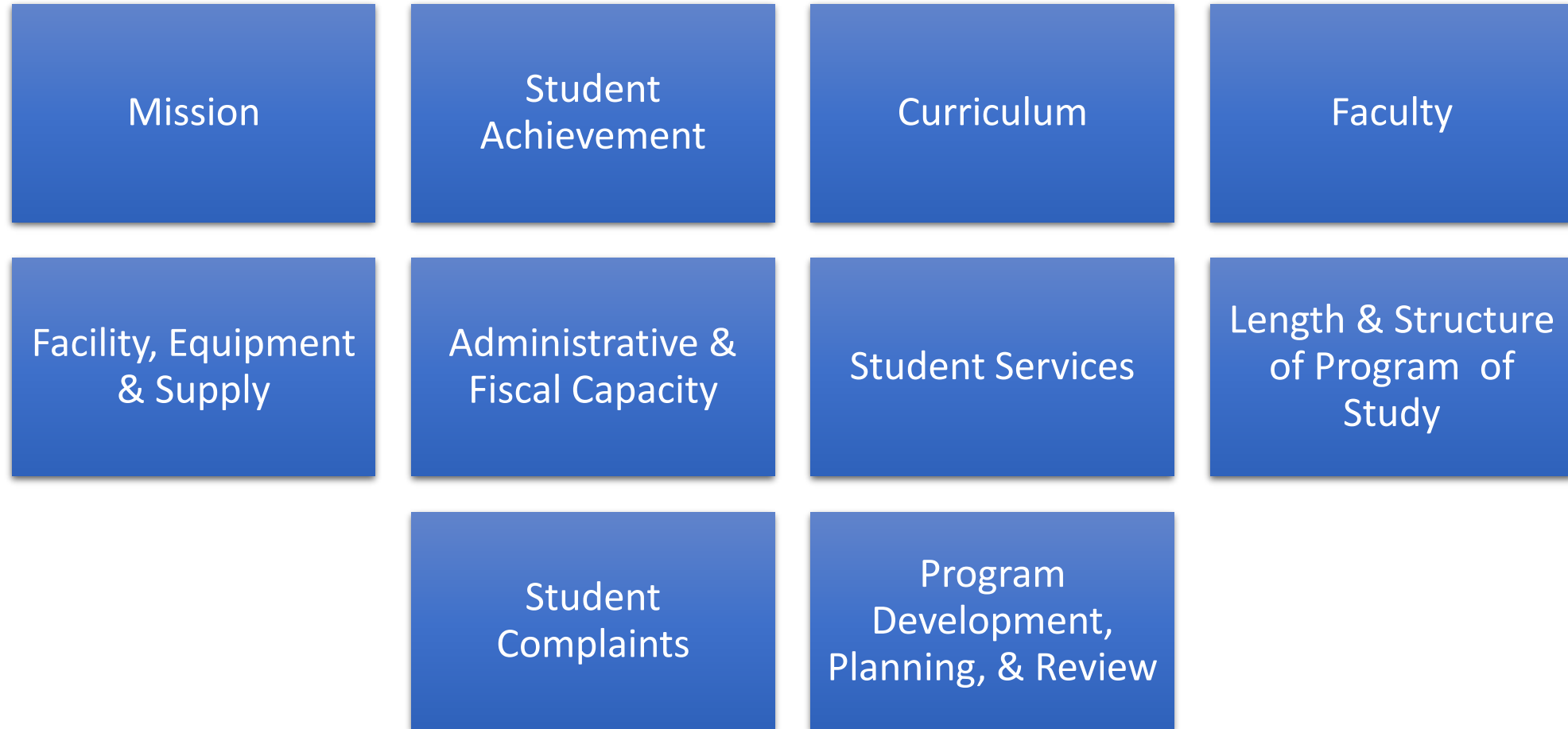
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Program Accreditation Standards — 10 Areas



Accreditation Outreach Committee

Learned:

- Extensive outreach to accrediting agencies did not yield one interested in using standards
- Survey of all programs showed strong interest in accreditation (82% very likely or likely to participate)
- Research showed cost of an agency reasonable

Recommendation to Congress:

- *Fund the creation of a new accrediting agency*

Student Learning Outcomes Committee

Recommended new standards on:

- Program level student learning outcomes
- Individualized learning plans for each student participating in a college catalog class

Revised standards:

- Require written reports indicating student progress in areas of academics, socialization, independent living, & career/employment
- Information & support provided to faculty & staff about impact of an individual student's disability on learning, & strategies to support, instruct & assess student

Enrolling, Supporting, Retaining Students with ID

Learned:

Misinformation from ED & confusion in the field on ID definition in HEOA

Pressure to admit students who do not have ID

Need for professional development on characteristics of students with ID & individualized planning & supports for individual students to ensure success & retention

Resulting Standards Revisions

Standards revised for clarity & to ensure:

- Individualized planning & supports in academics, career/employment, social competencies, & independent living
- Professional development, training & supervision of those who work with students
- Students receive ongoing advice, counseling, & support in all aspects of their program

Recommendations to the US Dept. of Education

Correct the misinformation provided to TPSID applicants & on Department website regarding definition of ID

Review selection of and training provided to CTP peer reviewers

Recommendations to Congress

Allow all students with disabilities to submit IEPs, 504 plans or other documentation for accommodations in college (RISE Act)

Provide TA to students, families & faculty (RISE Act)

Fund pilot programs for disability service offices to provide services to SWD beyond 504/ADA accommodations

Increased Focus on Person-Centered Planning

Learned:

- wide variation in use of PCPs
- many do not address all needed areas

A new standard requires programs to utilize & document person-centered planning approach.

- Guidance includes...” a student-focused plan with specific goals & action steps that will lead to the student’s vision for his/her future.
- PCP must include a description of “what works” for student, including learning strategies, accommodations, & individualized supports & services.
- There is no expectation or requirement that PCP be a lengthy document”

Inclusion in Classes, Employment, & Campus Community

Learned:

- Concerns that some programs do not meet HEOA inclusion requirements or only have limited course options
- Challenges with accessing housing, campus activities, services & facilities

Standards revisions: more details about inclusion & an inclusive program of study, requirement for participation in a broad array of courses, addressing student access to facilities & services, & supports for students in housing.

Systemic Barriers, Collaboration, & Fiscal Sustainability

Learned: continued challenges with accessing VR & other funds

Joint recommendation to Department of Education & Congress:

- Identify & address legislative & administrative barriers to students with ID in accessing & meaningfully participating in:
 - Vocational rehabilitation services & funding
 - IDEA dual enrollment & use of IDEA funds for transition-age students still eligible for IDEA services
 - Higher education benefits for children of veterans
 - Industry recognized credential programs
 - Apprenticeship programs

Systemic Barriers, Collaboration, & Fiscal Sustainability

Learned: continued challenges with accessing VR & other funds

Recommendations to Department of Education:

- Highlight & broadly share employment & other positive outcomes of comprehensive transition & postsecondary education programs
- Highlight & broadly share examples of collaboration between VR & PSE programs & between local education agencies & PSE programs

Family Engagement

Learned: challenges for parents & programs regarding roles/expectations

Standards revisions:

- Require programs to communicate general information about program on an ongoing basis with stated process for family engagement & communication that reflects roles & responsibilities for students, families, & staff
- Students and families must be informed in plain language about FERPA, student control over parent involvement, and the option for students to waive FERPA
- Requirement for programs to seek & consider ongoing input on program development, policies, & practices from variety of stakeholders including students, alumni, & parents
- Requirements about how this stakeholder input & other program evaluation is used for continuous improvement

NCC Accreditation Workgroups

2011-2015



- Reviewed Standards of Existing Orgs
- Drafted Standards & Gained Public Input
- Developed Standards

2016-2020



- Field tested & Gained Additional Public Input
- Updated Standards
- Determined Feasibility of Existing Orgs
- Surveyed Programs

2021-2025

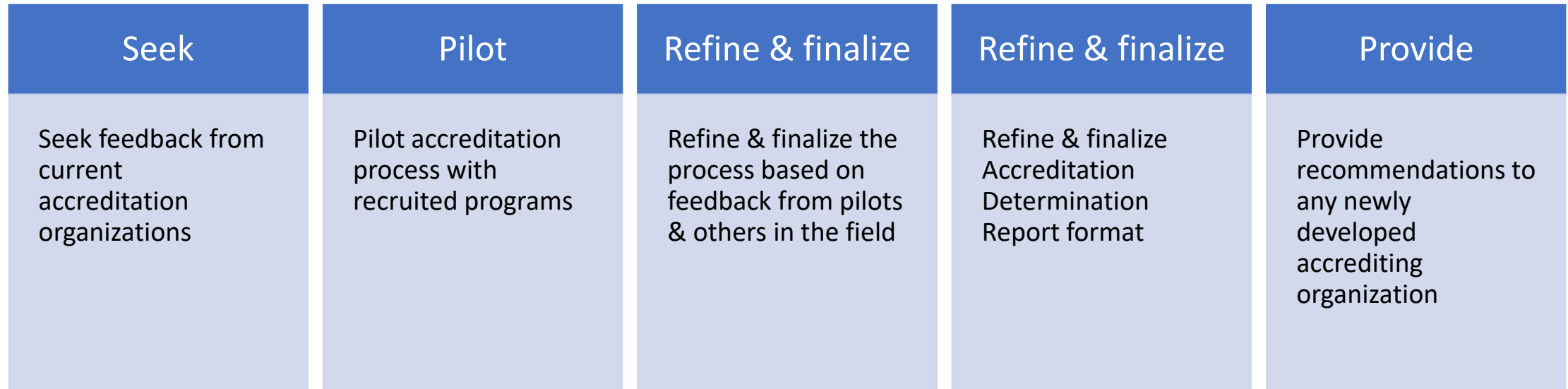


- **Develop Draft Process**
- **Develop Tools & Materials**
- **Pilot the Process, Tools & Materials**
- **Gain Input from Stakeholders**

Our Focus This Year

- *Recruited and convened 2021-2025 Workgroup*
- *Develop a draft process for accreditation*
 - Application
 - Self-study
 - Site-visit & Exit report
- *Develop tools & materials for implementation of accreditation process*
 - Accreditation guidance manual
 - Site-visit protocol
 - Accreditation determination report format
- *Gather feedback on tools & materials for implementation*

Our Future Work



How can Standards be used NOW?

Use now for continuous quality improvement

Students & families can use them when conducting a college search

ID what systems or tools the university uses to collect data for accreditation

Establish a data collection system within program

Create or update program assessment plans for Student Learning

Ensure that all program policies, procedures & handbooks are updated

Choose a few Program Accreditation Standards to begin a review

