

The Process for Maintaining Accreditation

August 2008

**BACCALAUREATE/GRADUATE DEGREE
SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS**



**ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE BUSINESS
SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS**

7007 College Blvd., Suite 420
Overland Park, Kansas 66211 USA

PH: (913) 339-9356

FAX: (913) 339-6226

E-MAIL: info@acbsp.org

www.acbsp.org

THE PROCESS FOR MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

BACCALAUREATE/GRADUATE DEGREE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

Revised August 2008

This booklet provides information for schools that have achieved accreditation with the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs. It includes information about the reaffirmation process and certain procedures to be followed while accredited. A separate booklet available from ACBSP describes the process to obtain accreditation.

The accreditation process and the standards and criteria for accreditation continue to evolve as part of a continuing improvement process. The policies and procedures described in this publication are subject to change by the governing body responsible for approval of these changes. Please contact ACBSP offices or ACBSP Gateway (www.acbsp.org) to determine if this is the most recent version.

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MAINTAINING AND REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION FOR BACCALAUREATE AND GRADUATE DEGREE GRANTING INSTITUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

This introduction provides suggested practices to promote your accreditation. The sections on the process begin immediately following this introduction on page 7.

Distinctions Between Member Institutions and Accredited Institutions

ACBSP maintains three categories to describe institutions that have paid dues to join ACBSP. All institutions enter as members of ACBSP and may refer to their business unit or institution as a Member of ACBSP. Upon making a decision to become accredited and approval of the application, the institution is stated to have entered candidacy for accreditation and can be referred to as a Candidate for Accreditation. Once the process for accreditation has been concluded, an institution may say the business unit and institution is Accredited or an Accredited Member. The ACBSP Gateway (www.acbsp.org) is updated regularly as institutions, and the business unit change from one status to another.

Promoting Your Accredited Status - Use of Logo

You and those at the institution are justifiably proud of obtaining this status. Based on practices at other institutions, we advise your display of the ACBSP logo on your stationery, in brochures and on your business school Web site. ACBSP offers three logos to use in promoting this status. They are reprinted below and are available in a variety of formats from the ACBSP office. Please call 913-339-9356 or send a message with your specific request to info@acbsp.org. Electronic files are provided in the press kits sent shortly after the institution receives notification from the Board of Commissioners.



Promoting Your Accredited Status - Publications

ACBSP permits a wide range of wording to promote your accredited status. You may seek assistance of ACBSP staff in developing proper wording or approval of wording you develop, but it is not required. Some wording suggestions are as follows:

The (School of Business at Our University) is accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Program based on standards that required our school to demonstrate teaching excellence.

The (School of Business) was accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs in (year) and must regularly demonstrate it maintains standards of excellence.

The (School of Business at Our University) has achieved voluntary accreditation from the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs demonstrating it has met standards of business education that promote teaching excellence.

Promoting Your Accredited Status - Web Site

The Web site of the institution and the business unit will probably be the most visible way to promote your accreditation with ACBSP. Nearly all institutions have a section devoted to “accreditation” where the regional accreditation for the institution is noted. This is one location for placement of ACBSP logo and wording noting the accredited status.

Another location is the home page of the business school or program. Again the logo or wording such as “Accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs” can be displayed.

Since Web pages are interactive, it may be helpful to place a link to the ACBSP Web page. We recommend use of the link www.acbsp.org which is our home page.

To view how other institutions have developed content on their Web page to promote their accredited status, go to any of the following links.

Chicago State University
<http://www.csu.edu/collegeofbusiness/>

University of Indianapolis
<http://business.uindy.edu/>

Promoting Your Accredited Status - Business Groups

An often overlooked opportunity to promote your accreditation is to the business community. The awarding of accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation is an opportune time to coordinate an effort for this visibility. Many of these business groups use Baldrige criteria, Total Quality Improvement, ISO 9000 standards or are familiar with these activities. They will be pleased to know a similar process exists for the business unit at your institution.

Consider these opportunities:

- Host a reception on your campus inviting members of the advisory board, businesses supporting internships, donors, local and state politicians, local media representatives and others. Sometimes a local business that is part of your advisory board will host the reception by covering the cost of the reception. This can include a second presentation of the certificate of accreditation by an official of ACBSP such as an officer, your mentor, a commissioner or staff member. If that is not possible, the president may wish to present the certificate to the head of the business unit. The picture and the reception should be used for a follow-up press release to local media.
- Local business organizations such as a chamber of commerce frequently have monthly networking meetings hosted by a business or member. Your institution is probably a member of this organization. Consider the opportunity to host such a meeting which assures the chamber or similar organization will send the invitation and collect the responses.
- Arrange a meeting with the editorial writer for the local or area business journal newspaper. Use this opportunity to speak about accreditation, other activities at the business unit and what stories are in process that could include quotes or information from the business unit faculty. Ask for assistance from the department at your institution that manages media relations.

Promoting Your Accredited Status - Admissions Office

Your admissions office is often unaware of your accredited status. The achievement of accreditation status is an opportunity to call this to their attention. Often, reimbursement of tuition is linked to specialized accreditation. More and more students and parents are asking about specialized accreditation for the business school.

As the admissions office or your office fields questions about transfer of credit or reimbursement for tuition, ACBSP can be of assistance. We are often able to contact the employer or institution to further explain the value of ACBSP accreditation and why it is equivalent or exceeds the value of other forms of accreditation.

Promoting Your Accredited Status - Accounting Accreditation

If the accounting unit within the business unit has achieved a separate accreditation in accounting, each of the above tactics may be used to promote this accreditation.

A separate logo has been developed to designate this accreditation which uses the words “Accredited Accounting” with the logos displayed on page three. This companion logo may be used on the Web site of the business school and accounting program or in publications.

The following sentence may be added to any of the suggested wording described on page three: “In addition to accreditation of business programs, the (name of accounting unit) has achieved an additional accreditation in accounting.”

Any celebration of separate accreditation in accounting may take place with an accounting firm that is an alum or member of advisory board.

Other Resources Available - Publications

In addition to this book which describes the process for maintaining accreditation, several other publications are referenced in this book and on ACBSP Gateway (this term refers to the branded name of the ACBSP Web site, www.acbsp.org).

- The Process For Obtaining Accreditation: Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Schools And Programs: This is the companion publication to this publication. It describes the process for schools that are not accredited, but are seeking accreditation.
- Accreditation Standards for Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Schools 2004: This document presents the standards and criteria for institutions to demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards.
- ACBSP Standards and Criteria for Demonstrating Excellence in Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Accounting Programs (2006): This document is used by schools pursuing accreditation of the accounting program within the business school or program.
- Quality Assurance Reports: These are the required reports submitted during the period of accreditation and referenced later in this booklet.

Other Resources Available - Conferences

ACBSP offers opportunities for individuals to be trained in the accreditation process at national and regional conferences. Please check the ACBSP Gateway (www.acbsp.org) for dates, locations, and registration procedures for each meeting or conference.

The Annual Conference is held in a major city in the United States every year in June. Some features of the Conference include:

--Pre-Conference Workshops Focus on Accreditation: Offered on the Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning prior to the Annual Conference, these sessions usually focus on accreditation process and standards, some of which may be offered during the Conference (see the description below). This is an ideal way to learn more about changes in the accreditation process and reaffirmation if your schedule does not permit attending the conference or you want to attend other concurrent sessions during the conference.

--Meeting of the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Commission: This is the annual meeting of all Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree institutions where business related to the accreditation process is conducted. This includes adopting changes in the standards, election of members to the Board of Commissioners, recognition of schools entering candidacy and other business. All Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree members may attend and vote regardless of their accredited status.

--Accreditation Sessions: These educational tracks are offered during the Conference and focus on a review of the standards and criteria, best practices used by business units in achieving and maintaining accreditation, a review of the reaffirmation of accreditation process and training sessions for site evaluators and mentors. The specific sessions offered may vary from year to year.

--One-On-One Sessions: Conference attendees may set appointments to meet individually with a member of the Board of Commissioners and/or staff during these fifteen to thirty minute sessions. This is a time for your specific questions and discussions as you maintain your accreditation.

--Accreditation Banquet: This banquet includes the recognition of all schools that have achieved accreditation or have achieved reaffirmation of accreditation during the past year.

--Networking Opportunities: In addition to what occurs in scheduled sessions, there are ample opportunities to set appointments with specific persons involved in the reaffirmation process and visit exhibitors that offer services and products to assist you along the path toward maintaining accreditation.

--ACBSP membership is divided into geographic regions. Each region conducts a regional meeting each year, typically in the fall. Many regional meetings include a presentation on the accreditation process by a member institution or by an ACBSP staff member. This is for institutions seeking accreditation and institutions that are currently accredited. Members may attend a meeting in another region if a specific accreditation activity is not offered in their home region. The cost and time to attend a regional meeting is often lower than the cost to attend the national conference.

Other Resources Available - Staff

The ACBSP staff is always available to assist individual business units that are considering accreditation or are in the process of accreditation. The staff includes a Director of Accreditation that leads the overall effort, a part-time Associate Director devoted exclusively to assisting Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree institutions and an Accreditation Coordinator. Other staff at the ACBSP office other than these individuals may be able to respond to your questions and requests for information.

Staff Roster as of August 2008

Director of Accreditation:	Steve Parscale	sparscale@acbsp.org	913-339-9356
Associate Director of Accreditation:	Ron DeYoung	DEYOUNG@nwmissouri.edu	816-695-9585
Accreditation Coordinator:	Diana Hallerud	dianahallerud@acbsp.org	913-339-9356

THE PROCESS FOR MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

BACCALAUREATE/GRADUATE DEGREE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

By successfully completing the process of accreditation, an institution tacitly agrees to abide by the accreditation policies and procedures of ACBSP. The accredited business school or program will keep ACBSP fully informed of the activities being conducted in the business school or program periodically as determined by the Board of Commissioners.

Periodic Reports

To assist the institution in complying with this requirement, ACBSP provides the format of the report to be filed by each institution every other year. The purpose of the report is to keep ACBSP apprised of the institutional activities and changes that take place so a determination can be made that the business unit remains in compliance with ACBSP accreditation standards. Any activity or change within the institution and/or the business unit that alters the status of the business faculty, the business curriculum, the resources in support of the business unit or other ACBSP accreditation standards must be reported.

In addition to requiring periodic reports, ACBSP reserves the right to conduct at any time special visits to, or request specific reports from, an accredited institution. These are rendered under conditions and within a time frame to be decided by ACBSP. Refusal of an institution to respond to, or cooperate with, such requests shall be grounds for suspension or revocation of its accreditation status or grounds for some type of conditional accreditation.

If, at any time, ACBSP has substantive evidence that an institution is in danger of having its eligibility status with a federal or state agency or regional accrediting body withdrawn or made conditional, ACBSP may direct a special visit to that institution's business school or program. The specified purpose of such a visit will be to ensure that the students attending the institution are not being harmed academically because of the institution's alleged noncompliance with federal or state regulations.

Faculty Credentials Committee

If the administration is unable to determine whether the business faculty has credentials that meet the faculty qualifications standard, the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Board of Commissioners has established a "Credentials Committee" to make such determinations. The committee is formed to assist institutions in determining if a faculty member is doctorally, professionally or minimally qualified.

Requests for review of one to four full-time faculty members or part-time faculty (adjuncts) in an institution's business unit may be sent to the ACBSP headquarters and processed on a timely basis. Normally it takes about 30 days for the institution to receive a response.

A faculty review by the Credentials Committee cannot be conducted unless there is a complete portfolio on each faculty member. A portfolio consists of:

1. Vitae (current).
2. Transcripts of all graduate work. Graduate courses that relate to the discipline(s) in which the faculty member is teaching should be highlighted and separately identified. The listing of these courses should be presented in a manner that the reader can evaluate the content of the course (e.g. course description).

3. A descriptive statement of the teaching experience of the faculty member including an analysis of the quality of teaching that is performed (e.g., peer evaluations, student evaluations, etc.).
4. A descriptive statement of the professional experience a faculty member has performed as it relates to the enhancement of teaching in the discipline(s) taught within the business unit.
5. A descriptive statement of the consulting experience a faculty member has performed as it relates to the enhancement of teaching in the discipline(s) taught within the business unit.
6. Scholarly and professional activities in which a faculty member has been involved as listed on the current vitae and recorded in Figure 5.6 - Scholarly and Professional Activities included in the ACBSP Standards and Criteria book. A succinct, descriptive narrative statement should be developed for each of the four categories of Scholarly and Professional Activities, and included in the statements should be a reference to the codes used in Figure 5.6. In other words, Figure 5.6 summarizes the activities of each faculty member and the descriptive statements should be included in each faculty member's vita describing the activities in more detail (e.g. title of paper presented and where or who the consulting was for and what was the assignment).

There should be one portfolio submitted for each faculty member being reviewed. In compiling the portfolio, substance in the narrative is more important than length. All materials submitted in the portfolio will be kept by the Credentials Committee and not returned to the institution or individual.

Privacy of Accreditation Process

All reasonable efforts will be made by ACBSP to protect the confidentiality of the information gathered and reviewed during the accreditation process. It should be noted, however, that legal requests for information pertaining to an institution's particular accreditation process involving ACBSP may require certain disclosures unforeseen at the time this document was prepared. Under such circumstances, the legal counsel of ACBSP will be involved in the decision about public disclosure of accreditation process materials of an institution.

Confidentially Requirement

Only evaluators, staff and commissioners of ACBSP ("Qualified Persons") who need to know the confidential information may review the confidential information. ACBSP shall cause all such Qualified Persons to abide by this confidentiality requirement. All evaluators sign an agreement outlining their ethical responsibility pertaining to conduct before, during and after an accreditation site visit with which they are involved. This means that matters pertaining to an accreditation visit are not to be discussed in public and are to be treated confidentially. The Board of Commissioners also requests that all ACBSP accreditation materials (e.g. Feedback Report, etc.) be maintained by the accredited institution as confidential information.

Conflict of Interest

Every reasonable effort will be made to have commissioners, staff and evaluators excluded from involvement in the accreditation process in which they have had, or might sometime have in the foreseeable future, a professional or personal conflict of interest. ACBSP policy requires that all active commissioners and board members of ACBSP remove themselves from any of the Association's discussions about their own institution's accreditation and all other institutions where they have a relationship that could involve a conflict of interest.

REPORTING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

This section provides the details on how member institutions are to provide ACBSP with information concerning substantive institutional changes that impact their business school or program and which have occurred since the institution received accreditation from ACBSP. The reason why they are included in this section and not the previous section on periodic reports is that substantive changes need to be set forth in a letter to ACBSP prior to implementation. Periodic reports are intended for changes that have been implemented. These institutional changes will also be included in a periodic report after implementation.

Approval and/or acknowledgement of all substantive changes are required by ACBSP. This section also explains the procedures ACBSP will follow in approving such changes.

Branch Campuses and Sites

ACBSP clarified in 2008 certain definitions related to branch campuses and sites where education programs are provided. The definitions are as follows:

1. **Main Campus:** Educational institutions which offer business courses or programs at several locations must declare one of these locations the Main Campus.
2. **Branch Campuses:** A Branch Campus is defined by ACBSP as a teaching location that is:
 - a. Geographically located away from the main campus,
 - b. permanent in nature,
 - c. offers courses in business programs leading to a degree,
 - d. has its own administrative or supervisory organization,
 - e. has its own budget, and
 - f. hires its own faculty, with or without the support of personnel from the main campus.
3. **Educational Site:** An Educational Site is defined by ACBSP as:
 - a. A site other than a branch campus or other instructional site,
 - b. geographically located away from the main campus,
 - c. geographically located away from the branch campus, that is
 - d. supported with faculty and administration from another campus.
4. **Other Instructional Sites:** An instructional site is an off-campus site, other than a Branch Campus or an Educational Site, at which the institution offers one or more courses for credit. These sites may include, but are not limited to, high schools, corporations, community centers, and churches.

Educational sites and other institutional sites are not considered campuses as outlined in this document. Their programs and degrees are reviewed as part of the review of the campus to which they are attached.

Certain policies and practices make it viable for a system to bring into membership and accreditation as many campuses as are ready for accreditation:

- The cost for annual membership for the main campus remains \$1,850 upon accreditation and a sliding scale is applied to all branch campuses while the next 30 campuses pay one-half of the dues amount. Following that, the next 40 campuses pay one-fourth of the dues amount while the 72nd campus and beyond pays 1/8 of the dues amount. One invoice is submitted to the main campus.
- Any online campus is considered part of the main campus.

- The system may bring into accreditation as many campuses as are prepared for accreditation at one time by payment of the standard \$2,500 fee. As other campuses are added in a subsequent year, the \$2,500 fee is required for a group or individual campuses and the accreditation process undertaken.
- Under certain circumstances new campuses may be added to the system. They are not required to undertake the accreditation process as long as the system-wide policies that apply to all campuses at the time of accreditation are applied to these campuses.
- Recognition of accredited status is provided for all campuses on the ACBSP website where all campuses are listed with designation as candidates and then later as accredited.
- Each campus designates a CHAMPION and CO-CHAMPION. The variety of all member benefits is delivered to all persons the campus.
- During the candidacy for accreditation process, it is advisable that a person be designated to assist with providing required information to the lead campus coordinator. This person may be a CHAMPION or a CO-CHAMPION.
- One self-study is conducted for all campus alleviating the need for multiple self-studies on each campus.
- One site-visit is conducted with a team slightly enlarged from a typical team. The visit typically begins and concludes at the main campus with visits to other campuses carried out by individual site team members during the middle of the week. The expense is greater than a one campus site-visit but dramatically less per campus than a typical visit. There is no requirement that all campuses must be visited.
- Once all existing campuses are accredited, any new branch campus may be added using a process described in the companion publication “The Process for Maintaining Accreditation: Baccalaureate/ Graduate Degree Schools and Programs.” Simply stated, this is considered a reporting of institutional changes.
- Upon granting of accreditation all campuses in attendance at the Annual Conference will be recognized with a framed certificate of accreditation. An unframed certificate can be sent to each campus not present, yet desiring to receive a certificate for framing.

Adding a Branch Campus

It is the responsibility of the main campus to notify ACBSP and to undergo a preliminary visit by ACBSP before identifying a branch campus as having accredited degree programs. Failure to notify ACBSP prior to initiation of a branch campus that offers business courses and degrees may jeopardize the institution’s accreditation status.

The main campus shall provide the rationale for initiation of the branch campus and other information about the educational program, degrees awarded, faculty, learning resources, physical and financial resources, admission and graduation requirements, compliance with state law evidencing authority to operate, number of students, administrative arrangements and other information ACBSP may request.

Permanent accreditation of degree programs at a branch of an institution can come only after an evaluation visit which must take place within six months of the opening of the branch. Only the Board of Commissioners in a regular session may designate permanent inclusion of degree programs at a branch campus as a part of the institution’s accreditation.

Upon granting accreditation to a branch campus, the ACBSP website is updated and respective entities are notified of the accredited status of the campus. Upon request a certificate suitable for framing and placement in a prominent location on the campus is provided. During the next dues billing cycle, the appropriate dues amount

for the campus will be added to the dues billing statement given to the main campus. The amount will not be more than 50% of the annual dues.

Closing a Branch Campus

It is the responsibility of the main campus to notify ACBSP of the closure of any branch campus. The main campus shall provide a rationale of closure of the branch campus. ACBSP staff will act to remove the campus from the ACBSP website and adjust all future dues billing. The Board of Commissioners will be notified at their next scheduled meeting. On a rare occasion the main campus will be asked for clarification of the rationale by staff or by Board action.

Adding or Closing a Site

It is the responsibility of the main campus or any branch campus to notify ACBSP of the opening of an educational site or instructional site that plans to offer business courses. Because it is a site, no further action is required. It is not necessary for ACBSP to provide an update to the website or adjust dues billing. The institution should update its various printed materials and website to show the site offers accredited programs.

It is the responsibility of the main campus or any branch campus to notify ACBSP of the closing of an educational site or instructional site. The main campus or any branch campus should provide a brief rationale for any closure.

New Degree Programs

If a business school or program expands or plans to expand its curriculum by offering new degrees, new majors or concentrations or a new emphasis after it has been accredited, then ACBSP must be notified during the early stages of the program planning and expansion. If the new degree is at a level currently accredited by ACBSP then report information on: student enrollment, program objectives, instructional resources, facilities and equipment, admissions requirements, graduation statistics, core professional components (CPCs) and the outcomes assessment process to ACBSP. If the new degree is at a higher level than what is currently accredited the school must complete a self-study to add the degree. New degree programs, majors or emphases must be in effect for at least two years and have graduates before accreditation will be granted.

If the new program is determined to be substantially different from other programs offered by the institution, ACBSP, at its discretion, may direct a new visit to be conducted. If, as a result of a new program visit, ACBSP determines that the overall quality of an institution is being diminished, the institution may be scheduled for a complete reevaluation.

Program Termination

A decision by an accredited business school or program to voluntarily terminate a part of the business program should be communicated to all interested parties which include, but are not limited to, students, governmental agencies, the local community and ACBSP.

New students should not be allowed to enroll in any program that is scheduled to be terminated if they cannot complete their work prior to the closing date for which public notice has been given. The institution is obligated to continue to offer appropriate courses, including prerequisites, so that the currently enrolled students will be able to complete the program. For this purpose, the period of time need not extend beyond sufficient time for students already enrolled, and maintaining normal academic progress, to complete the program.

Change of Institution's Name or Location

ACBSP should be notified immediately if an institution is contemplating changing its name and/or physical location.

Change of Ownership

The transfer of ownership or a major change in the controlling mechanism of an institution is considered to be a substantive change. ACBSP will handle changes of this nature as follows:

1. Automatic Discontinuation. Any change in ownership or control of an institution automatically results in immediate discontinuation of accreditation by ACBSP. Reinstatement of accreditation may be regained only upon application to and reconsideration by ACBSP. Because this discontinuation decision occurs without action or prior approval by ACBSP, this change of status does not constitute withdrawal of accreditation and is not a negative action.
2. Reinstatement. When automatic discontinuation occurs, the accreditation may be reinstated at the discretion of ACBSP. The reinstatement will occur according to terms and conditions that it has established or may establish at that time. The burden of application for reinstatement is entirely upon the institution. The Executive Director of ACBSP has the authority to grant a temporary reinstatement of accreditation for a period of time sufficient to allow for the consideration of all appropriate documentation. The temporary reinstatement period is not to exceed twelve months.
3. Effect. Until the application for reinstatement (either permanent or temporary) has been granted, the accreditation of the institution is in abeyance. If the reinstatement is withheld, the matter shall be treated as a deferral or a denial.

Closing of Institution

When ACBSP receives information, from whatever source, that an institution has ceased to operate, it shall immediately take steps to verify the information. If an institution has ceased to function, the grant of accreditation is summarily suspended. Such action is authorized without prior notice or hearing and with immediate public notice.

The institution shall be notified in writing of the suspension at its last known address. If no petition to lift the suspension is received within 60 days of this notification, the suspension automatically becomes a revocation.

Voluntary Withdrawal by an ACBSP Accredited Institution

There may be reasons for an ACBSP accredited institution to withdraw from ACBSP membership and thereby lose its accredited status. A most typical reason is failure to pay the required dues amount. ACBSP requests that the institution place this type action in writing and forward it to ACBSP headquarters. The institution is then required to make a public statement of its withdrawal, and to strike any reference to ACBSP accreditation from its catalog and other public documents.

ACBSP will act to notify various publications which maintain listings of accredited institutions including the *Higher Education Directory* and *Accredited Institutions of Post Secondary Education*. Organizations to be notified include the appropriate regional accrediting body and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

ACTIONS TAKEN WHILE ACCREDITED - PROBATION

When an accredited institution is found to be in noncompliance with the ACBSP standards, the Board of Commissioners may declare the accreditation of that institution to be probationary. Probation is a serious status that places the institution's accreditation in jeopardy and may be preliminary to the consideration of withdrawal. The Board of Commissioners will inform the institution in a written statement of the reasons for probation, along with an invitation to respond. A commissioner will be assigned to work with the institution to satisfy the conditions for the removal of probation. Probationary status requires a decision regarding continued accreditation by the Board of Commissioners within one year of the Board's action.

It is a principle of the Board of Commissioners that accreditation brings with it the good faith understanding by the accredited institution that continued accreditation requires the institution remain in compliance with the standards and concurs with ACBSP's Principles of Accreditation. Consequently, probationary action may occur when an institution is determined by the Board of Commissioners to be out of compliance with the standards or with the policies and procedures of ACBSP. This may include, but is not limited to, situations where an accredited institution:

1. Demonstrates a consistent pattern of non-compliance with the standards.
2. Fails to remove conditions of accreditation within the allotted time frame.
3. Fails to respond to directives or information requested by the Board.
4. Fails to comply with ACBSP directives with regard to promotional materials, and/or public perception of accreditation.
5. Demonstrates other significant inconsistencies with ACBSP accreditation policies and procedures.
6. Meets any of the conditions listed as reasons for suspension.

During the probationary period the institution maintains its accreditation status.

ACTIONS TAKEN WHILE ACCREDITED - WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal of accreditation differs significantly from withholding of accreditation; withholding denies an institution something it is seeking while withdrawal takes away something the institution already has, i.e., accreditation. Accreditation may be withdrawn by ACBSP through two types of actions: (1) suspension of accreditation and (2) revocation of accreditation.

Suspension of accreditation may occur when, in the judgment of ACBSP, an institution no longer substantially complies with the Standards of ACBSP. A judgment of suspension will always specify the time, conditions and terms by which an institution may regain accreditation through correction of the conditions that led to the suspension.

Listed below are several, but not all, of the reasons for suspension:

1. When any component of an accredited business school or program is thoroughly examined and found not to be in compliance with current ACBSP standards.

2. When Quality Assurance reports filed by the accredited school or program fail to conform to ACBSP reporting requirements.
3. When any substantial or significant changes in the operation, structure, governance, ownership, control, location, facilities or programs of the institution are made without notification of ACBSP.
4. When the institution fails to respond to inquiries or to cooperate in completing arrangements for a scheduled evaluation.
5. When the institution has deviated from standards or directives of ACBSP.
6. When the institution fails to file a Quality Assurance report on a timely basis as required by ACBSP.
7. When the institution has failed to pay its annual membership dues or accreditation fees.

Outright revocation of accreditation rarely occurs except in cases where the institution fails to pay the appropriate dues and fees amount required to maintain accreditation. Other than nonpayment of dues and fees, revocation most often follows suspension by ACBSP, and thereafter, the failure of the institution to correct deficiencies noted by ACBSP. A judgment of revocation by ACBSP requires that the institution begin anew the process of accreditation in order to regain it.

In all cases where accreditation is subject to withdrawal, either by suspension or revocation, the institution is afforded the following procedural guarantees:

1. Opportunity for a hearing before the Board of Commissioners on all material issues in controversy.
2. Written prior notice of the proceedings, the charges levied, and the standards by which the institution is ultimately judged.
3. A right of appeal as set forth in the section titled “Appeal Process.”

Withdrawal or Revocation of Accounting Accreditation

In case of the withdrawal or revocation of the accreditation of the business unit, any separate accreditation for the accounting program is withdrawn or revoked. The separate accreditation in accounting cannot exist except in institutions which have and maintain in good standing accreditation of the business unit.

Appeal Process

Certain appeal procedures have been established for institutions whose accreditation is subject to withdrawal by way of suspension. These procedures are intended to provide due process to institutions claiming to be aggrieved by the withdrawal actions but do not apply to decisions by ACBSP to withhold accreditation by means of denial of application.

An institution must file an appeal with ACBSP, signed by the chief executive officer of the institution making the appeal, within 15 days after suspension notification by ACBSP. An appeal of withdrawal of accreditation by ACBSP must be on the grounds that such a decision was:

1. Arbitrary, capricious or otherwise in substantial disregard of the standards or procedures of ACBSP, or
2. Not supported by substantial evidence in the record upon which the Commissioners based the withdrawal action.

The Board of Appeal has no jurisdiction or authority concerning the reasonableness of the accreditation standards and procedures. Nor will the Board of Appeal consider any evidence that was not in the record for review by the Board of Commissioners.

The Board of Appeal is a separate, independent appeals body established by ACBSP for the purpose of hearing appeals by institutions whose accreditation has been withdrawn. The Board of Appeal serves as another level of due process for institutions whose accreditation has been suspended.

The Board of Appeal is comprised of five persons each of whom must be a business faculty member or academic administrator of an ACBSP member institution in good standing. The appointment is made by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of ACBSP which will also appoint the chair of the Board of Appeal. Terms of appointment are also set by the Executive Committee. The qualifications of each member appointed to the Board of Appeal must include knowledge of, and experience with, the accreditation process. An appointee may not be currently serving as a Commissioner.

The Board of Appeal is empowered to review, upon notice of appeal by an institution, the withdrawal of accreditation of that institution. The Board of Appeal has the authority to:

1. Affirm the decision of the Board of Commissioners.
2. Remand the case to the Board of Commissioners with recommendations for further consideration if it finds the appeal to have been well-founded or justified.

When a case is remanded to the Board of Commissioners, the recommendation of the Board of Appeal shall not bind or limit the Board of Commissioners in any way.

When the decision of the Board of Commissioners is affirmed by the Board of Appeal, the appeal shall be deemed to be finally disposed of upon issuance of the Board of Appeal's decision. An appeal remanded to the Board of Commissioners by the Board of Appeal shall be deemed to be finally disposed of when the Board of Commissioners takes final action on the remand.

Briefs may be submitted prior to the hearing by the institution and the Board of Commissioners in a manner prescribed by the Board of Appeal. The Chair, or the member of the Board of Appeal designated in the Chair's absence, will preside at the hearing. The Chair will rule on all procedural matters.

The hearing shall be as informal as possible and appropriate under the circumstances. The institution may waive personal appearance, in which case the matter will be handled solely on the basis of the submitted briefs.

Every decision must have the concurrence of a majority of the Board of Appeal. Within a reasonable time following the conclusion of the hearing, the Board of Appeal shall issue a written statement of the decision along with its reasons for the decision and recommendation, if any, to the Board of Commissioners. Dissenting opinions may be filed. The majority opinion, with any dissenting opinions will be furnished to the institution.

Publication of the decision is the responsibility of ACBSP; however, it has no authority to withhold publication.

The appealing institution shall bear the following expenses in connection with the appeal:

1. Travel, housing and subsistence for the members of the Board of Appeal participating in the review, and
2. Cost of the hearing room.

An appeals deposit of \$2,000 must be made with ACBSP at the time of filing of the appeals notice described. This deposit shall be applied to the expenses to be paid by the institution as described above. Prior to the hearing, ACBSP may increase the amount of the deposit required to meet a realistic estimate of expenses involved should they be likely to exceed \$2,000.

MAINTENANCE OF ACBSP ACCREDITATION CONCURRENT WITH AACSB INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

In April 2007, the Board of Commissions established a procedure that permits ACBSP accredited institutions to maintain ACBSP accreditation concurrent with accreditation issued by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB). There already exists an accelerated process for AACSB accredited institutions to achieve ACBSP accreditation by submitting a self-study used in securing AACSB accreditation and conducting a site visit by an ACBSP evaluator. This process is outlined in the publication “The Process for Obtaining Accreditation Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Schools and Programs.”

Value of Concurrent Accreditation

The value for these institutions to retain ACBSP accreditation after securing AACSB accreditation includes the following:

- A significant investment has been made over a period of years to obtain and maintain ACBSP accreditation. This investment will be diminished by loss of this accreditation.
- At a time when accreditation is valued, the institution can be unique among many competitive institutions by promoting two accreditations; one granted for excellence in research and one for excellence in teaching. All institutions will find value in marketing their dual accreditation to prospective students, faculty, donors and others important to the strength of the business program.
- ACBSP offers significant member benefits focused on supporting the faculty and their professional development including individual membership by faculty. AACSB membership benefits are focused solely on the head of the business unit.
- With the approval of a separate accreditation process for accounting programs the accredited institution may find greater value in the accreditation process offered by ACBSP, and may chose this accreditation path over that offered by AACSB. Separate accreditation of the accounting program by ACBSP is available only to those that maintain accreditation of the business program.
- Many of the institutions achieving AACSB accreditation acknowledge that their ability to achieve this accreditation is based in part of the continuous improvement process utilized by ACBSP accreditation. Their continuation as an accredited institution is one way they can continue to applaud the support by ACBSP for their success.

Filing Quality Assurance Reports

Upon achieving AACSB accreditation an institution would notify ACBSP in writing of its intent to participate in the concurrent process with the next Quality Assurance report review cycle. Prior to the deadline for submission of the Quality Assurance report, the institution would be required to submit their most recent AACSB annual report. The annual report would be reviewed by the Board in a process similar to review of a Quality Assurance report and comment back to the respective institution.

Process for Reaffirmation of ACBSP Accreditation

Prior to the time of reaffirmation of accreditation, the institution must declare its intent to use the self-study conducted with AACSB as the self-study for reaffirmation of ACBSP accreditation. The institution would be required to submit the self-study, site team evaluation and the notification of action from AACSB. It is important that this occur as soon as possible after obtaining AACSB accreditation while the information is current. Ideally, this is immediately upon achieving AACSB accreditation to begin a cycle that coordinates the re-accreditation by AACSB immediately followed by the ten-year reaffirmation of accreditation by ACBSP. This cycle continues for a number of years.

Upon receipt of the materials, a validation site visit must be conducted. One evaluator will be utilized to make a site visit to the institution following review of the materials. This evaluator acts as a team to submit recommendations to the staff which is then sent to the President or Rector for comments. All documents are submitted to the Board of Commissioners for their action as reported in this process manual for maintaining accredited status. The institution will be notified of the action and have the same appeal process as exists for any other institution undergoing reaffirmation.

Assuming the appropriate action, the institution will be honored and recognized at the conference in the following June for reaffirmation of accreditation with all other institutions.

Costs for Reaffirmation and Maintenance of ACBSP Accreditation

The institution will be required to pay all costs associated with the site visit including an honorarium of \$250 per day, actual costs of travel and shipping of the contents of the self-study to the evaluator. The institution must continue to pay ACBSP membership dues as required of all accredited institutions and will be granted all benefits. This is consistent with the requirements for other institutions pursuing and achieving reaffirmation of accreditation.

Loss of AACSB Accreditation

If at any time the institution does not maintain AACSB accreditation, the institution may revert to the traditional process of filing Quality Assurance reports and following the reaffirmation of accreditation process as outlined in this publication.

TIMING OF REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is granted for ten years. Accreditation is officially granted on the date a letter is issued by ACBSP granting or reaffirming accreditation. For administrative purposes, the timing of reaffirmation is based on the year and month the business unit was honored and recognized for achieving accreditation or previous reaffirmation of accreditation.

The process begins with notice by ACBSP that the time to begin the reaffirmation process is required to begin. This notice is sent in multiple communications from ACBSP. Notices provide key information on the process and costs, so appropriate budgeting can occur and a contact person at the business unit is confirmed. It will also describe the opportunity for separate accreditation of the accounting program. This enables discussions and decisions to occur.

It is anticipated that the ninth academic year of accreditation is the year of the self-study, and the self-study is submitted on the following: August 15 or January 15 as indicated by ACBSP. A peer review site visit evaluation team visits the campus. The self-study, evaluation team feedback report and response by the institution's president are reviewed by the Board of Commissioner at the November or April meetings in the tenth year. If reaffirmation is secured, the institution will be recognized at the subsequent annual conference.

The following is an illustration of the preferred timetable for the process.

June 1999.....	Initial or Reaffirmation of Accreditation
June 2007.....	Notice of Timetable for Reaffirmation
December 2007.....	ACBSP and business unit confirms arrangements
2006-07 Academic Year.....	Self-study Conducted and Submitted
January 15/August 15, 2008.....	Site Team Visit
April/November 2008.....	Board of Commissioners Meeting
May/December 2008.....	Notice of Board Action
June 2008 or June 2009.....	Celebration of Reaffirmation of Accreditation

While accreditation is granted for ten years, an institution may elect to proceed to reaffirmation prior to the end of the ten year period. The most typical reason is a pending review by a regional accrediting body. A new reason is a desire to achieve a separate accreditation of the accounting program and to secure cost and time savings by conducting the processes concurrent with each other. Another new reason is because the business unit has completed a self-study using the Baldrige Criteria as described later in this document and the business unit wishes to use that document for their self-study.

REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION PROCESS - SYSTEM-WIDE ACCREDITATION

In recent years, there has been a priority placed by the Board of Commissioners in ensuring all campus that offer degree programs are accredited by ACBSP. In previous years, on occasion, only a main campus went through the accreditation process. By inference, branch campuses implied they also were subject to this review and received accredited status and this is false. On another occasion, the content of the branch campuses were the focus of this review, but the branch campus was never brought into membership and accredited status cannot exist without membership. In these cases, the ACBSP databases and website did not list in any way the branch campus. There may be conflicting messages presented to the public.

Definitions

In considering the scope of which locations go through the accreditation process, a set of definitions has been adopted by the Board of Commissioners. It is as follows:

1. Main Campus: Educational institutions which offer business courses or programs at several locations must declare one of these locations the Main Campus.
2. Branch Campuses: A Branch Campus is defined by ACBSP as a teaching location that is:
 - a. Geographically located away from the main campus,
 - b. permanent in nature,
 - c. offers courses in business programs leading to a degree,

- d. has its own administrative or supervisory organization,
- e. has its own budget, and
- f. hires its own faculty, with or without the support of personnel from the main campus.

3. Educational Site: An Educational Site is defined by ACBSP as:

- a. A site other than a branch campus or other instructional site,
- b. geographically located away from the main campus,
- c. geographically located away from the branch campus, that is
- d. supported with faculty and administration from another campus.

4. Other Instructional Sites: An instructional site is an off-campus site, other than a Branch Campus or an Educational Site, at which the institution offers one or more courses for credit. These sites may include, but are not limited to, high schools, corporations, community centers, and churches.

Process for Accreditation

Policies and procedures make it viable for a system to bring into membership and accreditation as many branch campuses as are ready for accreditation during the reaffirmation process:

- The cost for annual membership for the main campus remains \$1,850 upon accreditation and a sliding scale is applied to all branch campuses while the next 30 campuses pay 1/2 of the dues amount. Following that, the next 40 campuses pay 1/4 of the dues amount while the 72nd campus and beyond pays 1/8 of the dues amount. One invoice is submitted to the main campus.
- Any online campus is considered part of the main campus.
- The system will bring into reaffirmation of accreditation as many branch campuses as are prepared for accreditation. The traditional accrediting fee is waived as long as this process occurs during the reaffirmation process. This is for as many campuses as are prepared to go through the accreditation process.
- Branch campuses not prepared to go through the accreditation process will not be required to enter into membership and accreditation until they are prepared to undertake the process. Extraordinary efforts must be taken by the branch campus and main campus to clearly state the accreditation status or lack thereof.
- Recognition of accredited status is provided for all branch campuses on the ACBSP website where all campuses are listed with designation as accredited.
- Each campus designates a CHAMPION and CO-CHAMPION. The variety of member benefits is delivered to all persons the campus designated on the Member Enrollment Form.
- One self-study is conducted for all campus alleviating the need for multiple self-studies on each campus.
- One site-visit is conducted with a team slightly enlarged from a typical team. The visit typically begins and concludes at the main campus with visits to other campuses as determined by ACBSP carried out by individual site team members during the middle of the week. The expense is greater than a one campus site-visit but dramatically less per campus than a typical visit. There is no requirement that all campuses must be visited.
- Once all existing campuses are accredited, or nearly so, any new branch campus may be added using the process described in this publication as a reporting of an institutional change.
- Upon granting of reaffirmation all campuses in attendance at the Annual Conference will be recognized with a framed certificate of accreditation. An unframed certificate can be sent to each campus not present, yet desiring to receive a certificate for framing.

Process for Reaffirmation of Accreditation for Sites

Educational sites and other institutional sites are not considered campuses. It is anticipated that their activities will be reported as a part of the main campus or branch campus to which they are attached.

REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION PROCESS - SELF-STUDY

As noted in the timetable, the self-study year is considered the academic year prior to the tenth anniversary of receiving initial accreditation. The purpose of the self-study is for the business unit to demonstrate and record that it remains in compliance with the ACBSP accreditation standards or to outline activities that will lead to achievement. Many institutions will have received their initial accreditation using a previously provided accreditation process referred to as Option A or Option B. As of June 2007 the Option A and Option B were no longer available for reaffirmation of accreditation. All programs and schools must adhere to the June 2004 Standards and Criteria for Demonstrating Excellence in Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Schools and Programs book. These standards offer an outcomes based, mission oriented process based on the National Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. A copy of the publication outlining ACBSP standards is available by contacting the ACBSP office or by download at www.acbsp.org. The members of the business school or program may submit a Baldrige application and feedback report in place of a self-study.

Baldrige Process

Any business unit that has applied the Criteria for Educational Performance Excellence at the national, state or regional level, at the highest tier possible, and has received a feedback report within two years of an ACBSP accreditation cycle (January or August) may use the Baldrige application and feedback report in place of an ACBSP self-study for reaffirmation of accreditation.

ACBSP Tools To Assist in the Process

As the school begins the self-study, ACBSP can be of assistance.

- During the time since reaffirmation, a series of Quality Assurance reports have been submitted. Ideally these should be available from the offices on campus. If not, please contact ACBSP staff to determine how many previous submittals can be provided from ACBSP files.
- An example of a completed self-study using the 2004 criteria may be available for review. The intent is not to copy the content, only to provide an example of what one school provided as information.
- In 2006, ACBSP initiated a private community composed of all baccalaureate/graduate degree schools going through the reaffirmation process. The person designated as the contact person on the campus will be enrolled as a member of this community. This allows access to a library of materials and participation in a listserv with others going through this process.
- While a mentor is not required or suggested for the reaffirmation process, the school may decide to utilize a mentor. This is someone who is from an institution similar to your institution and one that has been through the reaffirmation process. There is an additional expense for honorarium and travel that will be required to be paid by the institution. The mentor may be assigned to assist with the business accreditation or the separate accreditation of the accounting program or both.
- Applicants are encouraged to ask questions throughout the preparation of the self-study, preferably through the private community, but also to ACBSP staff.

Preparation of Self-Study

The self-study document for the business unit must be typed and placed in two volumes. Volume I represents the text of the report and Volume II has the appendices for bulky items like the vitae for faculty and syllabi for

required courses. The self-study for the accounting program is anticipated to be composed of one volume and may reference reports in the self-study for the business unit.

Upon completion of the self-study for the business unit, five copies and one electronic copy are sent to ACBSP where the report will be examined and the necessary arrangements will be made for a team of trained evaluators to conduct a site visit. Accompanying the self-study reports should be five copies of the institution's catalog covering the self-study year. If accounting accreditation is being pursued, three copies of this self-study report must be submitted.

The self-study is specific responses to each ACBSP accreditation criteria and a candid assessment of the business school's or program's strengths and weaknesses regarding each criteria, including whether it has achieved the standards and criteria, or how it will achieve the standards and criteria, with a timetable. Unique characteristics of the business unit not referenced in responses to individual standards, but which are significant in making the case for accreditation, should be set forth in the overview section of the self-study document.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS - EVALUATION TEAM SITE VISIT

After receiving the self-study report, ACBSP will put together a well-balanced team of trained program evaluators to conduct a site visit. ACBSP selects visiting team members from a pool of well-qualified persons who have experience in the Association's evaluation process. The person designated as the chair of the team will be responsible for assuring that the visit is conducted objectively. The size of the team (usually three members) and the qualifications of its members are determined by the type of institution being evaluated and the programs offered by that institution. Reaffirmation of a system with branch campuses will suggest a larger size team. If accounting accreditation is being pursued concurrent with business accreditation, one additional team member may be added to participate in review of the business unit accreditation and to focus on the accounting self-study report. This person has a background in requirements for accreditation of accounting programs. If accounting accreditation is being pursued separate of the business unit, the site team is composed of two persons.

Evaluation Team Appointment

To minimize potential conflicts of interest, ACBSP will construct evaluation teams that do not include former employees or a close relative of a former employee, a graduate of the institution, someone having previously expressed a personal opinion or someone who is in the immediate competitive area of the institution. The institution will be aware of proposed appointees and be provided an opportunity to object to anyone designated to serve on the evaluation team.

After the site visit dates are agreed upon and the team is appointed, the business unit shall be responsible for all logistical arrangements including but not limited to: hotel reservations, a meeting room on campus for team meetings, announcements of the arrival of the visiting team and arrangements for the visiting team to meet with key administrators, faculty, students, alumni, and community groups. These arrangements will be coordinated with the chair of the ACBSP site visit team. ACBSP staff is available to respond to any questions.

Preparing for the Site Visit

Copies of the self-study report will be distributed to each member of the evaluation team by ACBSP and to a member of the Board of Commissioners assigned to the institution. Prior to the site visit, team members are expected to carefully examine all materials received from ACBSP and the institution. The chair will establish which team member will be responsible for writing specific portions of the report.

About two weeks prior to the site visit a consensus call is conducted with all team members and the assigned member of the Board of Commissioners. Contact may be made with the institution only by the site team chair or commissioner following this conference call to request information or to raise specific issues to be discussed during the visit.

The precise length of the visiting team's visit will depend on the location(s), size and number of programs offered by the institution. It is typically arrival on the first day, extensive meetings on second and third day and departure on the afternoon of the fourth day. It may take an extra day for extensive off-campus sites and an extra two days for extensive branch campus visits.

In conjunction with the business unit's self-study coordinator, the team chair is responsible for working on logistics, gathering information, etc. The team chair also keeps team members informed about how the site visit arrangements are progressing and of the team arrival and departure times.

Team members will usually arrive the afternoon before the first day of the official visit. The team chair will notify the other members of the team of the time and place of their first team meeting. At the team meeting, the team chair will review the specific plans for the visit and generally organize the team so a successful visit is ensured.

Evaluation Team's Responsibilities

During its first day on campus, the team should meet with the president of the institution, the head of the business unit and others as deemed appropriate. The team begins the process of evaluation by considering the business unit in its entirety. As representatives of ACBSP, the evaluation team is responsible for verifying the information in the self-study report and evaluating the business unit to help determine whether the standards for accreditation are met.

The team should try to accumulate as much pertinent information as it can, and use sampling techniques where appropriate to review the accumulated data. The team's findings should reflect their collective judgment about the clarity of mission of the business unit and the ability of the business unit to deliver a quality educational experience to its students.

A final team meeting will be held during the last day of the site visit at which time the team will seek to reach agreement on the proposed content of its report. At this same meeting, the team chair should finalize plans for an exit interview with the head of the business unit and the head of the accounting program if separate accreditation in accounting is being pursued. At the exit interview, the team chair will provide the institutional representatives with an oral summary of the major points that will be in the team's written report. The team chair will make clear in the exit interview that the Board of Commissioners will make the final decision on accreditation and the team is not to express any opinions as to whether the unit will be accredited -- that is the sole prerogative of the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Board of Commissioners.

Following the Site Team Visit

The findings of the evaluators are first reviewed by the ACBSP staff for completeness and then sent to the institutional representative (CEO/President/Rector) to respond to the evaluators' comments in the report and the institution's views. A written response by the institution is requested within two weeks of receipt of the report. It then becomes part of the material reviewed by the Board of Commissioners.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS – ACTION BY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners is composed of nine elected Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree members of ACBSP and one public member appointed by the board. The Director of Accreditation is an ex-officio member of the Board (nonvoting) and serves as secretary.

During the accreditation cycle, the Board of Commissioners reviews the self-study materials, the evaluation team's report, and the institution's response and determines:

1. if the team's report is complete and supported with factual information, and
2. if the team's findings support the granting of accreditation, and
3. if the institution's response to the team's report is substantially in agreement with team's report. If not, the Commissioners will obtain clarification of conflicting information.

After careful review of the self-study report, the visiting team's findings, the response by the institution, and other relevant materials, the Board of Commissioners makes a determination of whether the business school or program meets the accreditation standards of ACBSP. The business unit will be notified, in writing, of its accreditation status.

Accreditation Reaffirmed

Accreditation shall be granted to those institutions judged by the Board of Commissioners to be substantially in compliance with the ACBSP accreditation standards. If an institution is accredited "with notes," the institution should address the notes in a report to ACBSP. Notes represent concerns of the Board of Commissioners and until those concerns are dealt with by the institution and accepted by ACBSP, the notes should be mentioned in the Quality Assurance reports to ACBSP.

Accreditation Granted with Conditions

There are occasions when the Board of Commissioners may grant "Conditional Accreditation" which means that most standards are met, but there are some deficiencies in meeting the ACBSP standards, and the President of the institution has pledged that the deficiencies will be remedied within a three-year time frame. When the deficiencies are ameliorated, the institution will write a letter to ACBSP asking for a review so the conditions can be removed. When deemed necessary, a Commissioner will visit the campus and make a determination of whether the deficiencies have been corrected. The report of these findings is made at the April or November Board of Commissioners meeting for their final disposition. Requests for a one-year extension, with justification, may be considered by the Board. If the deficiencies are not corrected within the time allowed, the institution will be notified that its conditional accreditation status has been rescinded and its current status is unaccredited.

Accreditation Action Deferred

When an institution is found to be in noncompliance with several of the ACBSP standards, the Board of Commissioners may defer action until a later date (usually within three years) pending remedial action and/or receipt of additional information. The reasons for the deferral will be stated in writing by the Commissioners, along with an invitation to respond. A deferral is, in effect, a ruling of no action at that time, and therefore cannot be appealed. This action differs from conditional accreditation in two main respects: first, the noncompliance areas are extensive; and/or second, adequate information concerning compliance with standards was not included in the self-study document or other related documents.

When an institution has corrected the deficiencies that caused the deferral, the institution is required to write a separate letter notifying ACBSP of the corrective action it has taken. A Commissioner will then be assigned to make a one day visit to validate that the deficiencies have been eliminated. Each April and November, the Board of Commissioners meets to review removal of conditions, and therefore, requests should be sent to ACBSP headquarters several months in advance of the Board of Commissioners Meeting in April or in November. The institution will be notified of the Commissioners action after the meeting.

Opportunities for Improvement

The Commission may suggest Opportunities for Improvement (OFI) for an institution. These suggestions are not requirements for maintaining current accreditation, but are offered as feedback that might enable the institution to move to higher levels of excellence through continuous improvement, an ACBSP core value. Because the Commission has the opportunity to review progress, levels of achievement, and best practices of all accredited and accreditation-seeking institutions, the Commission is well-positioned to provide information and feedback that could serve as "stretch goals" for a school. As individual schools continuously raise the bar, so will it be for the aggregate of accredited schools.

REAFFIRMATION ACCREDITATION PROCESS – FINAL STEPS

Following action by the Board, the institution is notified of the final action and if any remaining fees are due as a result of the accreditation process. Upon payment of final fees and any membership dues, the reaffirmation of accreditation is granted. The business unit will be notified, in writing, of its accreditation status. ACBSP staff will begin to prepare the institution for the celebration of the granting of reaffirmation of accreditation that will occur at the annual conference in June. This includes attendance at the Accreditation Banquet and a special breakfast during the Conference.

SEPARATE ACCREDITATION OF ACCOUNTING PROGRAMS

Since this subject has been mentioned in the previous two sections, it is appropriate to introduce this subject at this time.

Accounting Program Accreditation

One of the new issues for institutions that have ACBSP accreditation of their business unit is the opportunity for accreditation of their accounting program during the reaffirmation process. This is not to imply that business unit accreditation does not include accreditation of the accounting program. This has always been the case and has not changed. What has changed is the opportunity for the accounting program to meet a separate set of standards and criteria for the program and achieve separate accreditation. Some of these reasons are stated in the next section.

In 2006, the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Commission approved the standards for institutions with business unit accreditation to apply for a separate accreditation for the accounting program. The separate accreditation of the accounting program is a new procedure made available for the first time in 2007. It is available only to institutions that currently have accreditation of the business unit or concurrent with seeking business unit accreditation. The criteria for achieving separate accreditation of the accounting program are being released concurrent with release of this process publication and is described on page five under the heading, "Other Resources Available."

The process for separate accounting accreditation is available for institutions beginning reaffirmation of their business unit or initial accreditation of their business unit that have not yet finished their self-study. The process to achieve this as part of the reaffirmation process is described in this publication.

The process may also be secured separate from the initial or reaffirmation process. That process is not described in this publication. It is described in the companion publication on obtaining ACBSP accreditation or by consultation with ACBSP accreditation staff.

Value of Accounting Program Accreditation

Why is this separate accreditation being offered? There is a growing desire by state boards of accountancy to recognize the role of accrediting bodies in helping to verify the quality of the accounting curriculum. The exact rules have yet to be determined and it is unknown how many states will adopt the recommendations of the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy. The initial discussions support the concept that students graduating from a program that has attained separate accreditation in accounting will receive minimal scrutiny of any transcript and will have been determined to meet the recommended requirements in curriculum.

Nearly all of the other benefits that exist for business accreditation apply to accreditation of the accounting program. A detailed listing of the benefits of accreditation is provided in the companion publication for obtaining accreditation. The support of this accreditation by an alumni graduate from the accounting program may be available to support the costs to achieve this accreditation. If an institution is seeking this funding, ACBSP can be helpful in outlining the costs and benefits for preparation of a case statement.

COST OF REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION – BUSINESS

The costs related to obtaining reaffirmation of accreditation by ACBSP will vary from institution to institution because of location and expenses for the site visit team.

Accreditation Fees

As of July 2008 the dues for accredited institutions is \$1,850. This is \$600 more than the amount charged unaccredited institutions. Part of this reason is that the cost of any application fee (\$2,500) or maintenance fees (\$500/year) used during the initial accreditation process is not charged during the reaffirmation process. These funds are used to cover the expenses of the Board of Commissioners to review Quality Assurance reports, and to support the institution during the years of accreditation.

If the institution does decide to secure the separate accreditation of the accounting program concurrent with reaffirmation or non-concurrent with reaffirmation, a fee of \$1,250 will be charged. Once the accounting program is accredited, there is no separate annual fee or difference in membership dues nor will a fee be required upon reaffirmation of the accounting program assuming accreditation of the business unit is maintained.

Site Visit Team

The largest anticipated expenses for reaffirmation are for the expenses of a site visit team. This amount is estimated at \$6,000 for three persons for three days. Pursuit of a separate accreditation of the accounting program adds \$2,000 to this amount. The amount of a deposit required prior to the visit is \$3,500. The cost breakdown is provided in the box at the top of the next page.

- An honorarium of \$250/day is provided to the leader of the site visit team and \$150/day to other members of the site visit team. This is a total of \$1,650. If the institution is pursuing separate accreditation of the accounting program a fourth person will participate at an honorarium of \$150/day.
- The cost of air, automobile, and ground transportation for a team of three persons is estimated at \$2,400 but can vary significantly. The college may use its own resources to purchase and issue airline tickets with the required advance planning. If the institution is pursuing separate accreditation of the accounting program a fourth person will participate at an estimated travel expense of \$600.
- The cost of lodging and meals. The selection of a hotel for the team is typically done by the business unit in consultation with the leader of the site team. The estimated two-night stay with meals is estimated at \$2,000. If the institution is pursuing separate accreditation of the accounting program a fourth person will participate with an estimated additional expense of \$650.
- The expenses of the site team visit include costs for ACBSP to ship to the visiting team and others the self-study documents submitted by the business unit and accounting program. The estimated cost is \$100.

ACBSP will pay each evaluator individually after they file an expense claim and attach receipts for the expenses of the site visit. The business unit is responsible for reimbursing ACBSP on a timely basis for additional expenses. Any expended funds from the \$3,500 deposit are returned back to the business unit.

Other Costs

These expenses do not include the annual membership fee. Membership as an accredited institution is required to begin the reaffirmation process and must continue during the process.

Nor do the costs above include expenses for individuals to attend ACBSP regional or annual conferences. Attendance at the conferences offers participants the opportunity to attend workshops on the accreditation process and to learn about the content of accreditation standards and criteria, an opportunity to meet individually with ACBSP staff to discuss specific issues and questions, and to possibly meet with the mentor and members of the Board of Commissioners. At the conclusion of the process, representatives of the business unit will want to attend the accreditation banquet at the annual conference to receive the certificate of accreditation and to celebrate the achievement of accreditation.

