



# E-Councilor

Fall 2015

## The 411 on Course Prep Hours

In 2011 the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) developed a method for supplementing student financial aid award by counting unsupervised out-of-class homework (or “course prep”) hours towards a program’s financial aid credit hours. Financial aid credit hours—which are not to be confused with a program’s academic credit hours—determine the amount of a student’s Pell Grant or federally-backed student loan. The intention of the USDOE is to acknowledge and award the significant amount of work that students are expected to do outside the classroom.

**Program Eligibility.** The enhancement of student federal financial aid credit hours with course prep assignments is available only for credit hour, non-degree programs which have met prior USDOE requirements for financial aid eligibility. Also, the Department has limited the number of course prep hours available to supplement the financial aid credit hours for a program to no more than 25% of the program’s in-class hours as approved by the institution’s authorizing state agency and its accreditor. Allowable homework hours for work-based activity courses (internships, externships, or clinical assignments) are limited by COE to two hours per week—or a total of 20 hours for quarter-hour courses or 30 hours for semester-hour courses.

*“The enhancement . . . is only available for credit hour, non-degree programs which have met prior USDOE requirements . . .”*

**USDOE Requirements.** There are four primary conditions that the Department has established for a program whose students may be eligible to benefit from these additional federal financial aid credit hours: (1) the assigned out-of-class homework must support the learning objectives of the course, (2) the homework assignment must be submitted to the course instructor and evaluated, (3) the homework grades must comprise a portion of the student’s final grade for the course, and (4) the institution’s accrediting agency must periodically review the homework to ensure that the previous three requirements are being met.

COE has developed an application called the Program Modification Application. During an accreditation or substantive change visit, COE team members may ask to see a course syllabus and the homework submitted to the instructor for a particular course, in addition to the Program Modification Application submitted by the school for the program. Team members will look to verify that the assignments support the objectives of the course, that they have been graded, and that these grades have been averaged into the final grade for the course.

*Alex Wittig, Associate Executive Director—Institutional Compliance*



**Register Now**

## **Annual Meeting and Candidate Academy**

**November 4-6, 2015**



The 2015 COE Annual Meeting and Fall Candidate Academy will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, November 4-6. The registration fee, which includes all sessions is \$550 through October 7, and \$600 per person beginning October 8.

The conference hotel is the Sheraton Atlanta Downtown. See the COE website ([www.council.org](http://www.council.org)) for complete registration and housing information.

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## **ACEN Approves COE to Accredite Registered Nursing Programs**

According to the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), a nursing program must demonstrate that it meets or continues to meet all ACEN requirements to be eligible for initial or continuing accreditation. One eligibility requirement is that the governing organization is accredited by an ACEN-recognized agency. Previously, ACEN had recognized COE as an institutional accrediting agency for nursing administered by a vocational school and granting a certificate.



To better serve its schools offering registered nursing programs, COE sought recognition from ACEN to accredit these programs. COE created supplemental accreditation criteria to ensure complete alignment with ACEN standards and criteria for the COE accredited institutions aspiring to achieve ACEN accreditation for their registered nursing programs. COE will require that these institutions demonstrate compliance with the supplemental accreditation criteria. COE's request for ACEN recognition for the registered nursing programs was approved at the ACEN Board of Commissioners meeting on July 9-10, 2015.

For more information about ACEN accreditation, contact Dr. Nell Ard at [nard@acenursing.org](mailto:nard@acenursing.org) or 404.975.5004 and visit the ACEN website at <http://www.acenursing.org/about-candidacy/>.



## COE Commissioners Nominated

COE's nominating committee met in August 2015 to review nominations for vacancies on the Commission. Two commissioners were nominated to serve a second term; four commissioners were newly nominated. These nominees, who will serve three-year terms, will be considered for election by the delegates at the Annual Meeting in November.

**Dr. Diane Culpepper** has been the director of Lake Technical College in Eustis, Florida, since 2010. Prior to coming to Lake County, she served for 23 years in the Career and Technical Education Department for Orange County Schools at both the institution and district levels. Dr. Culpepper earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Central Florida, and her Ph.D. in Workforce Education from the University of South Florida. Diane serves on the Florida SkillsUSA Board of Directors, on the Commissioner on the Council of Occupational Education, and on a variety of state and national CTE committees. She has been a team leader and team member on numerous COE visits.



**Charles Johnson, Jr.**, retired, spent over 40 years as an educator in the public and private postsecondary community. Most recently, he served as area director for Federal Student Aid for the U.S. Department of Education in the Dallas, Texas, area. Currently he is a voice actor, narrator, and audio book producer. Over the past ten years he has been actively involved with occupational education as a Commissioner with COE and as a team member and team leader for several COE site visits. Recently he was elected Chairman of the Board for TA Foundation, Inc., a private non-profit service organization. He holds a B.S. degree from Alcorn State University and a M.B.A. degree in Finance and Management from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio.



**James J. Brosnan** is the superintendent of the Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District (McCann Technical School) in North Adams, Massachusetts. His technical education career spans 43 years. He is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross with a M.Ed. and CAGS from Worcester State University. He is past-president of the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, has been a member of the Massachusetts Governor's STEM Advisory Council since 2010, and serves as chairman of the Career Vocational Technical Education Board of Directors at Berkshire Community College. Jim retired as a Colonel from the United States Army Reserve in 2007 following a 36-year career, including deployment to Kuwait and Iraq in 2003.



**Donna McCulloch** is the academic manager of the Oconaluftee Job Corps Center in Cherokee, North Carolina. She has 25 successful years of experience as an educator with Schenck Job Corps Center and the Buncombe County and Haywood County public school systems in western North Carolina. Ms. McCulloch received her B.S.Ed., M.P.A., and M.S.A. from Western Carolina University. She has been an active member of professional education associations at the local and national levels. Ms. McCulloch has served as a team member on accreditation site visits for SACS and COE with her local school system.





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**Dr. Dennis Merritt** is currently the director of Hillyard Technical Center (HTC) with the Saint Joseph Missouri School District. He has been with HTC for twenty years. Dr. Merritt holds a B.A. from Mid-America Nazarene University, a M.S. from the University of Central Missouri, an Ed.S. from Northwest Missouri State University, and an Ed.D. from Saint Louis University. He is a Certified Manufacturing Engineer and member of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers. Past roles include district chairman of the Northwest District Missouri Council of Career and Technical Association.



**John W. Rebstock** is president and founder of Beauty Schools of America which serves south Florida with five campuses. Additionally, he is president of Palm Beach Academy of Health and Beauty and its allied health branch campus in Ft. Lauderdale. He has served as a team leader on numerous COE visits and as an Appeal Panel member. John has served with the Florida Department of Education and is a founding member of the Florida Association of Cosmetology and Technical Schools. John remains committed to the accreditation process and looks forward to continuing his service with COE.



## ~ Staying Ready for Compliance ~ Keep the Welcome Mat Out

Beginning in 2016, the Commission will routinely conduct unannounced visits. The Commission expects all schools to be in compliance with all standards at all times, not just the during week of a scheduled team visit. The rationale behind this effort is that if administrators know that an unannounced visit is possible, they are more likely to be in a state of readiness. One positive outcome will be that much less preparation will be required and documentation organized in preparation for a regularly scheduled visit since all documentation will remain current. The main outcome will be that institutions will constantly demonstrate quality and compliance.

The institutions to be visited will be selected on a combination random and risk basis. High risk areas include, but are not limited to, substantive changes, high cohort default rate, heightened monitoring, if an institution's operation becoming a matter of constituent concern, or other conditions. The institutions randomly selected will be most likely mid-cycle in their reaffirmation term.

The team may evaluate any area of the institution's compliance with the standards, criteria, and conditions of accreditation during the team visit. The institution shall be provided a copy of the team report and shall submit its response to any team findings of non-compliance to the Council office within 30 days from the date that the report is transmitted from the Council office.