



*Commission on Colleges  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

## **ADVERTISING, STUDENT RECRUITMENT, AND REPRESENTATION OF ACCREDITED STATUS**

### **- Guidelines -**

All accredited postsecondary institutions, or individuals acting on their behalf, must exhibit integrity and responsibility in advertising, student recruitment and representation of accredited status. Responsible self-regulation requires rigorous attention to principles of good practice.

#### **Advertising, Publications, Promotional Literature**

- A. Educational programs and services offered should be the primary emphasis of all advertisements, publications, promotional literature and recruitment activities.
- B. All statements and representations should be clear, factually accurate and current. Supporting information should be kept on file and readily available for review.
- C. Catalogs or other official publications should be readily available and accurately depict
  - 1. institutional purposes and goals
  - 2. entrance requirements and procedure
  - 3. basic information on programs and courses, with required sequences and frequency of course offerings explicitly stated
  - 4. degree and program completion requirements, including length of time required to obtain a degree or certificate of completion
  - 5. faculty (full-time and part-time listed separately) with degrees held and the conferring institution
  - 6. institutional facilities readily available for educational use
  - 7. rules and regulations for conduct
  - 8. tuition, fees and other program costs
  - 9. opportunities and requirements for financial aid
  - 10. policies and procedures for refunding fees and charges to students who withdraw.
- D. In college catalogs and/or official publications describing career opportunities, clear and accurate information should be provided on any unique requirements for career paths, or for employment and advancement opportunities in the profession or occupation described.

#### **Student Recruitment for Admissions**

- A. Student recruitment should be conducted by well-qualified admissions officers and trained volunteers whose credentials, purposes, and position or affiliation with the institution are clearly specified.
- B. Independent contractors or agents used by the institution for recruiting purposes shall be governed by the same principles as institutional admission officers and volunteers.

- C. The following practices in student recruitment are to be scrupulously avoided:
1. assuring employment unless employment arrangements have been made and can be verified;
  2. misrepresenting job placement and employment opportunities for graduates;
  3. misrepresenting program costs;
  4. misrepresenting abilities required to complete intended program;
  5. offering to agencies or individual persons money or inducements other than educational services of the institution in exchange for student enrollment. (Except for awards of privately endowed restricted funds, grants or scholarships are to be offered only on the basis of specific criteria related to merit or financial need.)

### **Representation of Accredited Status**

- A. The term "accreditation" is to be used only when accredited status is conferred by an accrediting body.
- B. No statement should be made about possible future accreditation status or qualification not yet conferred by the accrediting body. Statements like the following are not permissible: "(Name of institution) has applied for candidacy with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association;" OR "The (program name) is being evaluated by the National Association of \_\_\_\_\_, and it is anticipated that accreditation will be granted in the near future."
- C. Any reference to state approval should be limited to a brief statement concerning the actual charter, incorporation, license or registration given.
- D. The phrase "fully accredited" should be avoided, since partial accreditation is not possible.
- E. When accredited status is affirmed in institutional catalogs and other official publications, it should be stated accurately and fully in a comprehensive statement.

Each member institution, when referring to its status of recognition by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools which has been achieved through the Commission on Colleges, must use only the following statement:

(Name of institution) is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award (name specific degree levels).

For institutions in Candidacy status:

(Name of institution) is a Candidate for Accreditation with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award (name of specific degree levels).

- F. The accredited status of a program should not be misrepresented.
1. The accreditation granted by an institutional accrediting body has reference to the quality of the institution as a whole. Since institutional accreditation does not imply specific accreditation of any particular program in the institution, statements like "this program is accredited," or "this degree is accredited," are incorrect and misleading.
  2. "Free-standing" institutions offering programs in a single field (e.g., a school of art, engineering or theology) and granted accreditation by a regional or national institutional accrediting body alone, should clearly state that this accreditation does not imply specialized accreditation of the programs offered.

*Approved: Executive Council, June 1985*

*Edited: Executive Council, June 1995*

*Edited in accordance with the Principles of Accreditation: June 2004*