

Use of Visiting Committee Reports and Notification Letters

Following an evaluation for membership or accreditation, initial or continued, the school is provided the following documents in sequence:

1. The visiting committee report to which the school is asked to respond as to its factual accuracy, the nature of the recommendations, and comments relative to the work of the visiting committee and the votes on Standards for Accreditation;
2. Following Commission action, a letter from the Director of the Commission, outlining the action taken, the continuing responsibilities of the school to the Association, and the recommendations to be dealt with in future reports; and,
3. A brief letter from the President of the Association noting the action taken regarding initial membership and accreditation. These last two letters may be expected some weeks following receipt of the visiting committee report.

The visiting committee report and notification letters regarding Commission/Association action are the property of the school. Either the report or the notification letter may be used in whole or part by the school for external purposes. However, if excerpts are to be released to the public, they must present a balanced view of recommendations as well as commendations.

Association policy as approved by the Board of Trustees, May 12, 1978, and as amended, December 10, 1981 states:

"If something is publicly released by an institution that misrepresents or distorts the Commission recommendation, the appropriate Director of the Commission should contact the chief administrative officer of the institution and request that corrective action be taken. If the misrepresentation or distortion is not promptly corrected, the Director of the Commission should so notify the Executive Director who is the chief executive officer of the Association and who speaks on behalf of the Association."

Neither the Association nor the Commission releases copies of any of the material relating to an individual school's evaluation without the express permission of the school. In certain cases, such as the institution seeking approval by the appropriate state department of education, or membership in or recognition by another agency, there will be sent, at the request of the head of school, a copy of the visiting committee report and the letter of notification regarding membership and accreditation from the Director of the Commission. In the event of a request being made for a research study, the material may be made available for use at the Association office only with the specific approval of the head of school.

Within the framework of the above policy, the Commission encourages, in the spirit of inquiry and institutional improvement, access to the documents relating to the evaluation process to interested parties in the school community.