

For Immediate Release
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ACICS to Seek Department of Education Recognition as a National Accreditor

(Washington, D.C.) The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) announced today that it will submit to the Department of Education a formal petition for recognition as a national accreditor by October 1. Additionally, ACICS has asked to be included on the agenda for the Spring 2018 meeting of the National Advisory Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI).

In June 2016, ACICS launched several meaningful reform efforts and since then has made significant progress in the following categories:

- ACICS has adopted and aggressively implemented new Accreditation Criteria to improve the effectiveness of its accreditation process, with particular emphasis on student outcomes;
- ACICS has established and implemented more robust standards, overhauling the architecture for collecting and verifying data, and implementing interim monitoring procedures;
- ACICS has overhauled and strengthened its monitoring approaches to identify and report problems with continued compliance;
- ACICS has strengthened its standards to be clear that institutions must come into compliance with the Council's standards within specified time frames or accreditation will be withdrawn. ACICS has taken prompt action to withdraw accreditation from institutions that have failed to meet its standards; and
- ACICS has strengthened its governance practices to support the integrity of accreditation process and decision-making.

"While these actions were initiated in response to concerns raised by the Secretary of Education in June of 2016, which culminated in the Department's decision to withdraw recognition of ACICS as an accreditor in December of that year, they represent much more than an effort to remedy our shortcomings," said Michelle Edwards, the new president of ACICS. "I believe ACICS is taking the steps necessary to become, over time, a leader among accreditors. I am proud of the tremendous work being advanced by so many members of the ACICS community and I am committed to our shared future."

In June 2016, ACICS made the decision to no longer accept new applications for initial accreditation, in order to focus the organization's resources on strengthening its standards and practices. Today, ACICS accredits 245 institutions with 570 main and branch campuses throughout the United States and abroad. ACICS continues to be recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the CHEA Committee on Recognition has recommended to its Board of Trustees that ACICS's recognition be continued for three years, a decision which has been taken under advisement.

Additional information on reform efforts underway at ACICS is available at www.acics.org.