



**TO:** Higher Education Committee

**FROM:** John L. D'Agati *John L. D'Agati*

**SUBJECT:** Distribution of Institutional Accreditation Applications

**DATE:** June 10, 2013

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** *John B. ...*  
**SUMMARY**

**Issue for Discussion**

A brief review of the process by which institutional accreditation applications are distributed to Board members for their consideration.

**Reason(s) for Consideration**

Review of policy.

**Proposed Handling**

This item will come before the Higher Education Committee for discussion at its June 2013 meeting.

**Background Information**

The Board of Regents is recognized as the decision-making body for institutional accreditation by the U.S. Secretary of Education. As an accrediting agency, the Board must conduct its own analysis of the self-study, peer review report and supporting documentation developed when an institution seeks its accreditation, consistent with US 34 CFR section 602.17(e).

In order to ensure that we remain in compliance with U.S. Department of Education (USDE) requirements, the Department will provide the members of the Board of Regents with the materials supporting a given accreditation application. These materials include the institution's self-study, the report of the peer review team, the institution's response to the review team, and the Department's summary and preliminary recommendation. Other materials can be provided as requested. These include, but are not limited to, supplemental information submitted to the Regents

Advisory Council on Institutional Accreditation (RAC), materials related to an appeal of the RAC's recommendation, institutional performance data, and the institution's catalog.

The Department will distribute these accreditation application materials electronically to all Board members at least one month prior to when an institution's accreditation application comes before the Board for a final vote. In addition, the Regents Office will retain the electronic file, should a member need an alternative way to access the materials. This process is consistent with the process used by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. We believe the electronic distribution of these materials will serve two purposes. First, it will help document the process by which the Board considers accreditation applications. When USDE staff reviewed the Board's 2012 application to renew its accrediting authority, they sought evidence that the Board conducted its own analysis of an institution's application. Second, it will provide an efficient means for distributing application materials to the Board.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Department distribute institutional accreditation application materials electronically to the members of the Board of Regents approximately one month prior to the Board's consideration of a given accreditation application.