

**PANEL COMMENTS AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ACCREDITATION
OF PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION**

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It has been enlightening to listen to the communications relative to efforts and energies being expended by the regional accrediting agencies, the Department of HEW, and the private agencies on behalf of Occupational Education.

Communications sometimes go awry. I had my communications break down the other night. I returned home late from an appointment and found a note on my pillow from my wife. The note said, "Regardless of what time you come home, call 466-7380." I picked up the phone and dialed the number. A sleepy voice at midnight on the other end of the line said, "Yes." I inquired, "Is this 466-7380?" And he said, "Oh, no, it is not." I looked at the note, scratched my head and said, "Are you sure this is not 466-7380?" And in a rather pleading voice, he said, "Friend, have I ever lied to you before?"

I felt that I had been pricked by the splintered fractures of communication. Let's hope that our communications relative to accreditation of occupational education programs won't go awry.

Utah Technical College at Salt Lake was accredited by the Northwestern Association of Secondary and Higher Schools June 1969. Accreditation was

achieved after complying with the usual accreditation procedures. The College completed a self-evaluation study. It was reviewed by an Evaluation Team headed by Dr. Winston D. Purvine, President of the Oregon Technical Institute at Klamath Falls, Oregon. Four of the nine member team were vocational educators; others had an association with vocational education on the collegiate level. The committee completed the evaluation and submitted a 44-page report. Each area representative or specialist made recommendations concerning their respective assignments. The team, however, made eight recommendations.

It will not be feasible to accomplish all the recommendations made. We have just completed a report to the Commission listing the accomplishments which we have made. In the event we do not deem it advisable to accomplish the recommendation, an explanation was provided.

Accomplishment of the occupational objective added dignity and prestige to the institution. It opened the door to participate in the distribution of Federal funds and it has made possible the transfer of credits from our College to other postsecondary colleges and universities. Students qualifying for an Associate Degree in Applied Science who desire to transfer to a four year college to obtain a B.S. Degree are now afforded the opportunity.

Many questions have been asked since we received accreditation. I thought the following would be of interest to the conference:

WAS A SPECIAL EVALUATION INSTRUMENT DEVELOPED FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF THE TECHNICAL COLLEGES ?

No, the instrument developed by Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools for the evaluation of two year colleges was used. Many community colleges have a trade and industrial education division--this division is accredited along with the other divisions of the College.

SHOULD ACCREDITATION BE PROVIDED BY A NATIONAL OR A REGIONAL AGENCY ?

It is our opinion that accreditation should be accomplished by an agency recognized by the Department of HEW in order that the occupational education school may participate in the distribution of Federal funds. At the present time occupational education schools are ineligible to participate in these much needed fund distributions.

Since accreditation was granted our College, we have received two library grants and assurance of a guaranteed government loan subsidy for the construction of our Student Union Building. Student Loan programs and Work Study funds have also been made available.

Preferably the agency should adapt the instrument to the type of school being evaluated. Policies and procedures should be designed specifically for the review of occupational education programs.

IF STUDENTS ARE NOT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, ARE THEY ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE WITHOUT PASSING THE GED EXAMINATION ?

One team member recommended that students in this category be required to pass the GED before being awarded an Associate Degree in Applied Science. This has not been a requirement of the College; however, any student who progresses to this stage in his training would certainly be able to perform satisfactorily on this examination.

DOES AN INSTITUTION NEED BOTH INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND PROGRAM ACCREDITATION ?

It is our opinion that schools who have received institutional accreditation need not continue program accreditation. Such a procedure would lead to bankruptcy of the school both in time and money as was stated earlier. Our Practical Nursing program was at one time accredited by the NAPNES, the National League for Nursing, and the Utah State Board of Nursing. We should strive to eliminate the duplication. Although, I would readily admit that accreditation with these agencies was of great assistance in developing an acceptable program.

Institutional accreditation is preferable. As I recall, Dr. Ward's study indicated that vocational schools favor program accreditation. I would surmise that this is because institutional accreditation has not been within reach and program accreditation is available through private agencies.

The College Advisory Committees do yeoman service in advising the departments as to the type of training required to accomplish the objective.

WOULD IT BE DESIRABLE TO ESTABLISH A NEW AGENCY TO PROVIDE ACCREDITATION FOR TRADE TECHNICAL SCHOOLS ?

We have found the Northwest Association cooperative and willing to accredit the technical colleges in Utah. I hope they will move to accredit all occupational schools in their area. We believe that accreditation can be accomplished through the regional agencies.

We certainly recommend that the Commission include a greater number of occupational educators in their membership and as the gentleman from New England said yesterday, "The establishment of a fourth Commission would be appropriate."

During our appearance before the Commission of Higher Schools, a former member of HEW commented, "I don't think we should accredit these schools; they are very different from our academic institutions." Other members were quick to respond that many community colleges had been accredited and that these institutions each had a trade and industrial education division.

Utah Technical College has existed for twenty-two years under three names. It was initially Salt Lake Area Vocational School. After twelve years the name was changed to Salt Lake Trade Technical Institute. Again to attempt to dignify the occupational education programs, the name was changed to Utah Technical College at Salt Lake. One participant commented that at the rate we were going, it wouldn't be many years before we were a full-fledged

four year college. We are extremely determined to retain the trade technical objectives and do not intend to desert the occupational objectives in favor of academics.

One great disadvantage of accreditation has been the addition of our name to many rosters. We are "lambasted" with junk mail.

In summary let me briefly enumerate our feelings and mention one or two other points without elaborating on them.

1. Accreditation is essential for postsecondary education.
2. Evaluation instruments should be designed for the evaluation of occupational education.
3. Institutional accreditation seems preferable to program accreditation.
4. Establish a separate commission or include a larger number of occupational educators on the present commission.
5. Involve the faculty to a greater extent.
6. Associate degrees should not be a requirement for accreditation of occupational education programs.