



Program Accreditation: Current Status and Next Steps

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2019 State of the Art Conference



NATIONAL COORDINATING CENTER



The TPSID National Coordinating Center at Think College is a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston.

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Agenda

Why program accreditation is important

Brief history of Accreditation Workgroup

Accreditation Report and model standards

Current Workgroup activities and Next Steps

Importance of Program Accreditation

Benchmarks are useful for quality assurance and improvement.

Valuable for institutions of higher education, federal student aid offices, accrediting agencies, students with ID and their parents.

Implementation will validate and strengthen programs.

2008

Passage of the HEOA

2011

First Accreditation Committee Formed

2012-15

Model Standards Developed

2016

Report to the Department of Education

Report on Model Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability: A Path to Education, Employment, and Community Living

The National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup

September 30, 2016



 ThinkCollege
NATIONAL COORDINATING CENTER

REPORT TO:

THE HONORABLE JOHN B. KING, JR., UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
THE UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS
THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND INTEGRITY

Report on Model Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability

<https://thinkcollege.net/resource/accreditation-and-credentials/report-model-accreditation-standards-higher-education>

Model Standards in Ten Areas

Mission

Student Achievement

Curriculum

Faculty

Facility, Equipment and Supply

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity

Student Services

Length and Structure of Program of Study

Student Complaints

Program Development, Planning, and Review



Focus of this Year's Work

What agency will conduct accreditation reviews once standards are finalized?

How important is accreditation to current college programs?

How do the Model Standards work in the “real world”?

Researching Accrediting Agencies

Contacted national organizations and accrediting agencies.

Researched existing accreditation agencies for possible fit.

Determined that a regional accreditor (that accredits the entire institution) not feasible

Researching feasibility issues regarding establishing a new agency.

Continuing outreach to accreditors.

Conducted an Interest Survey with all college programs

How Important is Program Accreditation to Existing Programs?



Accreditation Outreach Committee conducted a survey in June 2019.



117 responses.



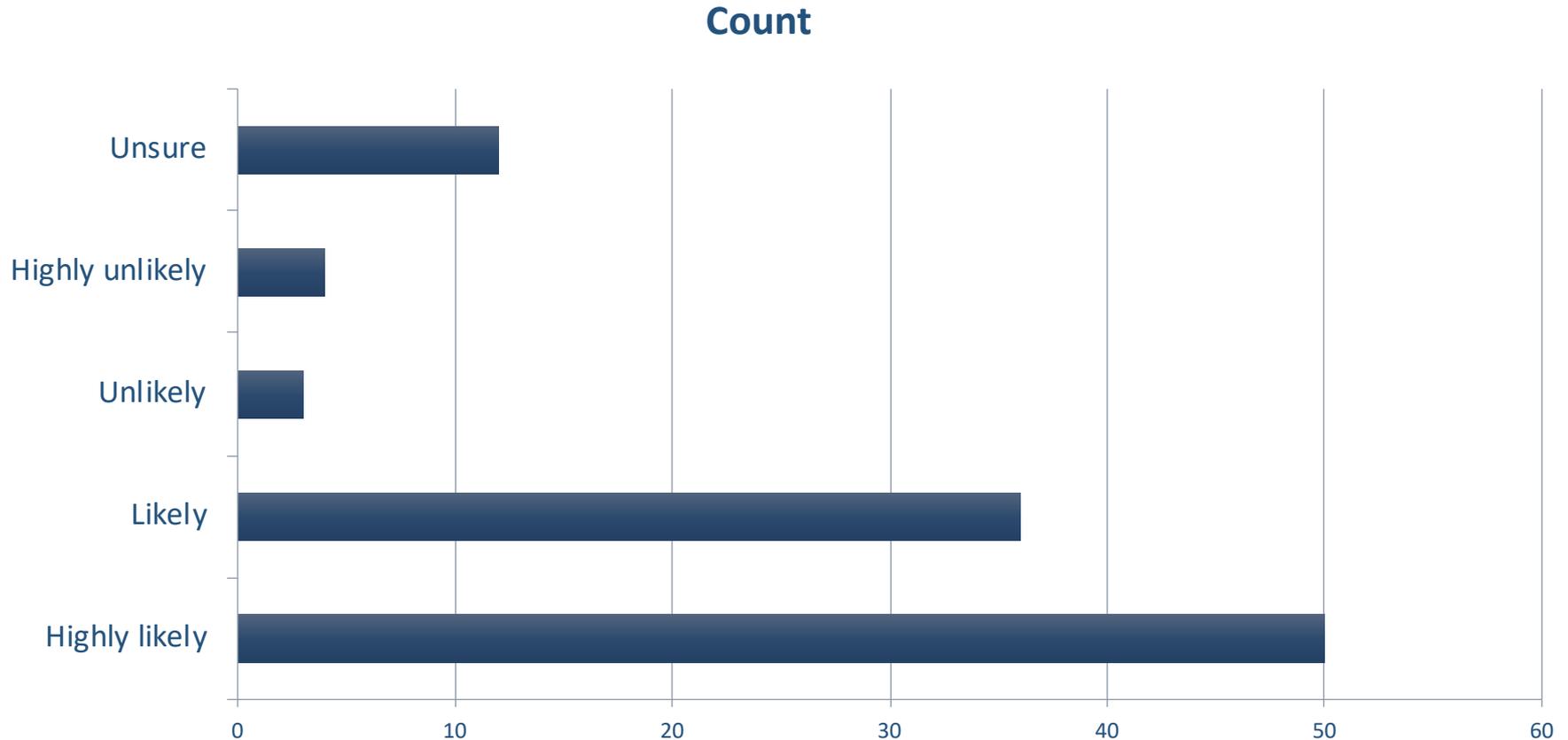
Overwhelming interest in participating in accreditation.



Strong response should support effort to accredit programs.

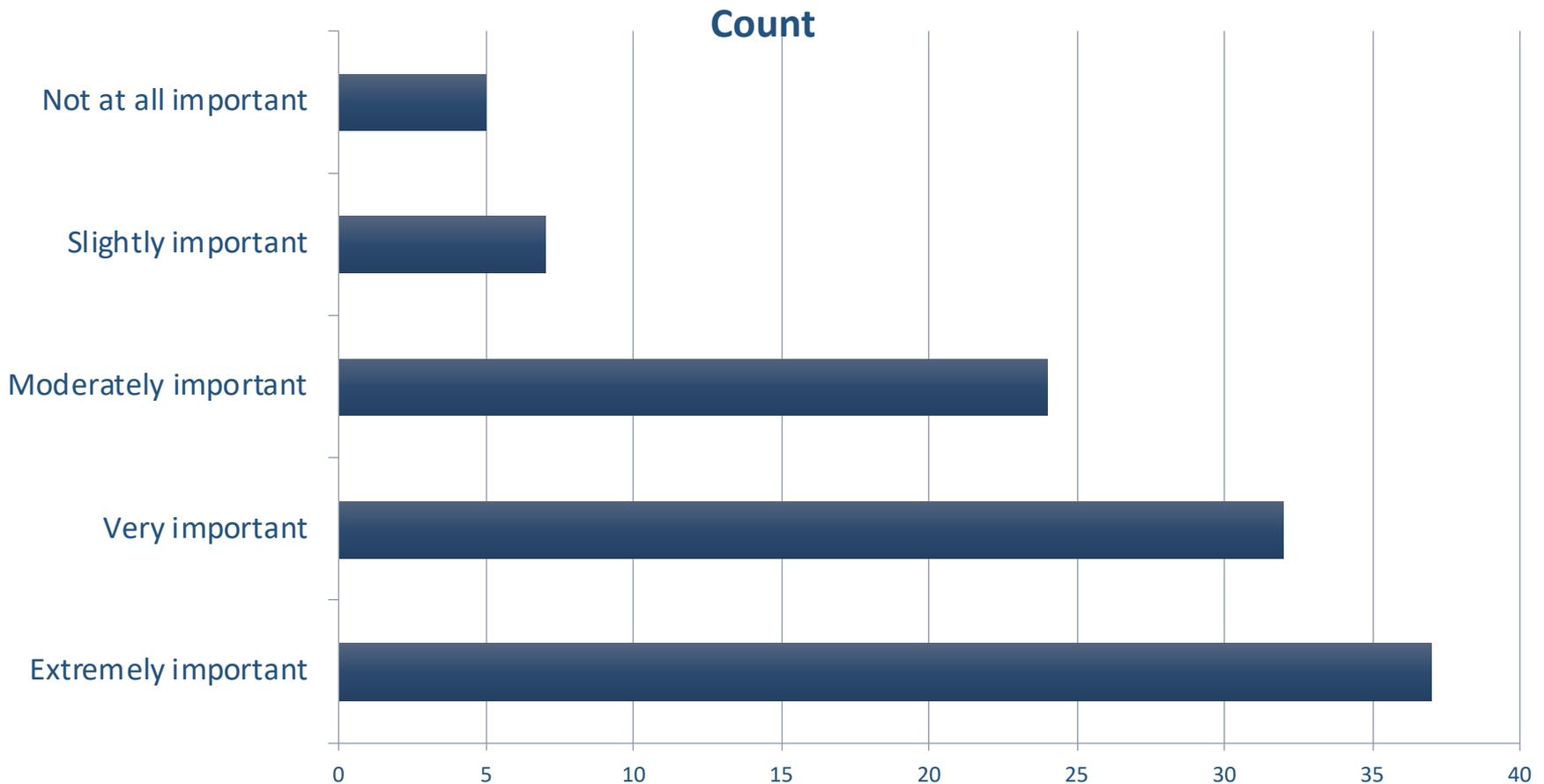
If an accrediting body was created for postsecondary education programs for students with ID, how likely is it that your program would submit to the accreditation process?

81.9% (N = 86) responded “likely” or “highly likely”



How important is it to you, as program director, that your program become accredited?

65.7% (N = 69) said it was either “extremely important” or “very important”.



Testing the Standards in the Field



Created an online survey in Survey Gizmo



Recruited eight college programs with varying characteristics



Each completed an online survey

Consider if they meet the standard

Provide evidence of how they meet the standard

Comment on the process and the standard

Field Test Participants

Vanderbilt University

Pennsylvania State University

College of Charleston

George Mason University

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Millersville University

University of Northern Colorado

Massasoit Community College

Field Test Process

A review committee considered each completed survey and met to review the responses, then held individual calls with each program.



The review committee developed recommended updates to the standards and guidance based on the field test results.



Analysis prepared with original standards/guidance, field test results/public input and proposed updates.



In-person workgroup meeting to consider the analysis and make decisions about changes. This process is ongoing.

Key Take-aways from the Field Test



Some standards were unclear or easily misunderstood



Guidance, examples, models needed to help clarify intent and meaning



Clarification needed on how to provide evidence that a standard was being met.

Key Take-aways from the Field Test



Wide variation in Person Centered Planning. What is effective PCP? How can it be evaluated in accreditation?



Variability in access to all facilities, equipment and services, although IHE services not always effective.



Student complaints are in a standard but nothing about what happens when a student conduct or other complaint is raised about a student.

Key Take-aways from the Field Test



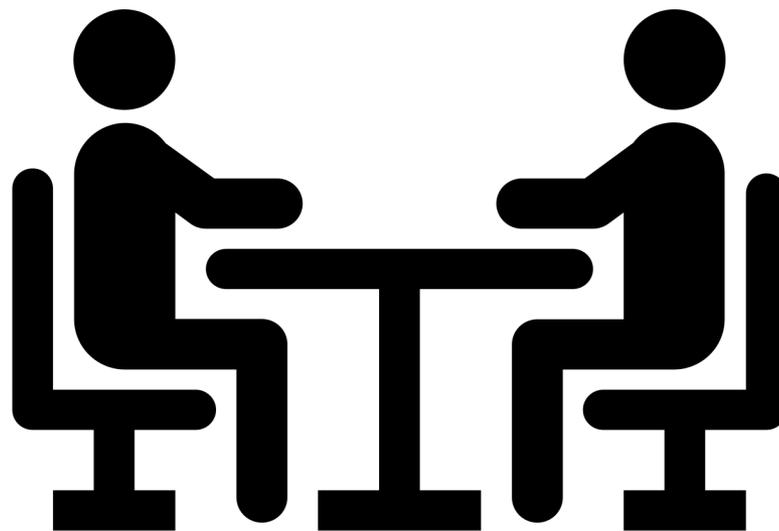
Wide variation and lack of common understanding re: Student Learning Outcomes.



Wide variation re: support for students in academics, career development and social/independent living.

Based on field test
and program and
public input – more
input on a few
areas is needed

You can
help!



Key Points from Public Input

“Retrofitting” IPSE into existing IHEs an ongoing challenge (examples Title IX, Code of Conduct issues, housing)

Concern about pressure to admit students who do not have ID and difficulty of students with ID getting admitted and receiving needed services/supports.

“Mushy” person-centered planning and individualized supports and services sometimes lacking in academics, socialization, independent living and career/employment based.

Some program concern about parents wanting to be too involved and some parents feeling not involved enough.

Student Achievement Standard 3:

Standard: The program utilizes a student learning outcomes (SLO) assessment plan and process that allows it to measure student achievement in various areas.

Guidance: Student learning outcomes state what students are expected to *know* or *be able to do* upon completion of a course. In addition to courses, SLOs for programs for students with ID articulate knowledge and skills in areas including academics, socialization, independent living, and career/employment. SLOs should be clear, observable and measurable. These student learning outcomes may contribute, or map to, program outcomes.

A new standard for Individualized student planning?

Professionals develop written plans that include individualized learning outcomes and assessment plans for each student, and strategies and supports necessary for the student to succeed in academics, socialization, independent living, and career/employment.

With respect to academics, if the student is not expected to learn all material in a course, for instance if a student is auditing a catalog course, a document will be developed that identifies: what the student is expected to learn; how the student will be evaluated; and supports, strategies, accommodations or modifications that are needed for the student to master essential learning.

External input



What should the requirement be about how a program gets external input?



Should an advisory committee be required?



Should input from students and families be required, and if so, how?



How often should a program get input?



What documentation should be required re how input is addressed?



Next Steps: 2019 - 2020



Program Accreditation

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In the US, institutions of higher education and programs within the institutions are accredited using standards that help ensure that the educational experience offered to students meets an acceptable level of quality. Program accreditation standards provide guidelines for colleges and universities on how to develop and improve programs, validate these programs within institutions of higher education, and give students and their families an assurance of quality.

In the 2008 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, Congress directed the National Coordinating Center to convene a workgroup to develop model program accreditation standards for college programs for students with ID. When implemented, the standards will move the field forward by offering accreditation of college programs that support students with ID.

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Chair: Accreditation Work Group

Stephanie Smith Lee has served as the Chair of the Think College National



Accreditation Standards: Report to Congress

Model accreditation standards for higher education programs for students



Meet the Accreditation Workgroup

The Think College National Coordinating Center has

<https://thinkcollege.net/resources/innovation-exchange/accreditation>