



Guidelines for Implementing Third Party Notification

In accordance with Commission Policy A-5, *Public Notification and Third Party Comments Regarding Full-Scale Evaluations*, an institution scheduled for a comprehensive evaluation is required to notify its publics that a visit is scheduled and that comments from the public are invited. Comments are accepted only when they are signed with an original signature and submitted in writing to the President of the Commission.

In most cases, a newspaper or other widely distributed publication will be the most appropriate vehicle for an announcement of a forthcoming visit. However, the Commission recognizes that an institution's opportunities and vehicles for reaching its publics vary from place to place. **Since submission of a press release to the media does not ensure publication, it may be necessary for the institution to purchase space in an appropriate publication or find other means of ensuring its publics are informed of the visit and the opportunity to provide comments to the Commission.**

Alumni magazines and campus newsletters may also be useful ways to communicate to certain constituencies. An institution with operations off-campus, including those outside the United States, should find ways to provide appropriate notification to those affected by the institution's presence at those sites.

The Commission does not prescribe specific language for the public notification of impending visit. However, the following information is to be included in **all** internal and external notifications related to institutional implementation of Policy A-5:

- a) purpose of the comprehensive evaluation visit;
- b) dates of the visit;
- c) institution's current accreditation status with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities;
- d) year of the most recent Commission action relating to the institution's accreditation;
- e) invitation to send comments directly to the Commission. The invitation is to include the Commission's address, telephone number, and date by which comments must be received in the Commission office (no later than one month prior to the scheduled visit);
- f) comments are considered with regard to an institution's qualification for candidacy or accreditation;
- g) signed comments are forwarded, as received, to the institution, evaluation committee, and the Commission; and
- h) instructions to obtain a copy of Commission Policy A-5, *Public Notification and Third Party Comments Regarding Full-Scale Evaluations* (either via the **Standards and Policies** and then **Operational Policies** links on the Commission's website (www.nwccu.org), or by contacting the Commission office at 425/558-4224).

The public notification should appear three to four months before the scheduled comprehensive evaluation. The institution is required to provide the Commission with a tear sheet or photocopy of the printed notice no later than three months prior to the scheduled evaluation visit.

Please contact the Commission office at 425/558-4224 if you have any questions about these guidelines.