

ACCREDITATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The decision to enter into a collective bargaining agreement is primarily institutional, governed by state laws for public institutions, and federal laws for private institutions. Accrediting Commissions take no position on these decisions.

Regional accreditation evaluates the effectiveness of a school in achieving its stated purposes. Its primary concern is with the total school. Whenever institutional policies and procedures are modified by collective bargaining agreements, such modifications should not contravene the requirements of the Commission's accreditation standards, nor should negotiations unduly disrupt the educational processes of the school. To do so may constitute a substantive change in the institution's accredited status.

Within this context, the Commission believes that the self-study, the visiting committee, and those responsible for accreditation decisions must consider the impact of collective bargaining on the quality and effectiveness of the school. To help achieve this result, the following principles are presented for adherence:

- Collective bargaining processes should not impede self-study participation by administrators, faculty, and support staff, or appropriate involvement of trustees and students.
- The self-study committee and the visiting committee should assess the impact of collective bargaining on the quality and effectiveness of the institution.
- Visiting committees should use care in composing recommendations, which may be used by either party to influence the bargaining process. In writing the evaluation report, committees should avoid the use of language that is inflammatory or easily distorted for partisan purposes.
- Institutional representatives are reminded that committee recommendations must be considered, but no one of them is a mandate or an arbitrary standard.
- Institutions should strive to clarify the respective roles of faculty bargaining units.
- Bargaining agreements should be a part of the document collection set aside for review by visiting committees.

If an institution believes that the collective bargaining climate will impair an effective self-study or evaluation visit, the chief executive officer is invited to confer with the Commission's Director. In unusual circumstances, the Commission will consider a request to defer either or both processes until conditions are more favorable.