President Paneitz and Dr. Sterling
NorthWest Arkansas Community College

In reviewing our records we have discovered a problem in the application to certain AQIP institutions of Commission policy regarding the period for which accreditation is reaffirmed. In brief, it is this: When we admitted your institution into AQIP, we did so in the expectation that we would comply with Commission policy by scheduling your Systems Appraisal within ten years of your last reaffirmation of accreditation, which occurred under the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) process and then scheduling your reaffirmation subsequently based on the seven-year AQIP Cycle. This has led to the anomaly that some AQIP institutions will not have had their accreditation formally reaffirmed for many years since their last Reaffirmation in the PEAQ program. Commission policy is clear that every accredited institution must have its accreditation reaffirmed every ten years with some allowance for an extension into an eleventh year for good cause. This policy means that we must now make arrangements so that the Commission can formally reaffirm your institution's accreditation as soon as possible following the requirements of the AQIP program.

The Commission retains its recognition from the U.S. Department of Education by demonstrating, among other things, that it follows its own policies and procedures, including its policies related to Reaffirmation of Accreditation. Although one might surmise that we could correct the problem by waiving the policy or adjusting it retroactively, the Commission must comply with its own policies.

Your institution has already had a Systems Appraisal, but has not yet hosted a Quality Checkup Visit (although we just scheduled one for 2012-13). It was also scheduled for Reaffirmation of Accreditation in the 2013-14 academic year. However, to avoid any potential problems, <u>we need to move up the schedule for your Reaffirmation so that it is complete before December 31, 2012</u>. To do so, <u>we will need to conduct your Quality Checkup before September 30, 2012</u>, and have our Reaffirmation Panel review your record in AQIP and recommend Reaffirmation of your accreditation to our Institutional Actions Council during this coming fall. On this schedule, you will be reaffirmed while the current Criteria for Accreditation are still in effect, avoiding any need for you to demonstrate compliance with the newly revised Criteria that become effective January 1, 2013.

Following formal Reaffirmation, your next Reaffirmation in the AQIP cycle will be scheduled seven years later, and all other activities will remain the same. Our objectives here are to avoid violations of policy, maintain the integrity of the AQIP program, and serve our institutions well. We believe this modification of your schedule will accomplish all three of these goals.

We realize this is a burden neither you nor we planned for, so we will value greatly your cooperation to make this plan work. An outline of what your institution will need to do is enclosed. Linda Johnson, an experienced and knowledgeable AQIP peer reviewer, facilitator, and Quality Checkup visitor, will be coordinating our schedule of accelerated Quality Checkup visits in 2012-13. We and Linda will hold open conference calls on Friday May 4 and Friday May 11 at 10-11 AM CST to discuss details of this change

and answer your questions. To participate, call 312-263-0456, press 2 when you hear the recorded message, and enter 2747# (AQIP#) when asked for the conference code.

Please call either of us (at 800-621-7440, x. 106 for Steve or x. 141 for Eric). You can call Linda at 605-351-9380 if you need help rescheduling your visit (e.g., if one of the previously scheduled peer reviewers is unable to schedule any alternative date).

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