Call for Comments – April 2020

PROPOSED GLOSSARY CHANGES
(with related definitions grouped for comparison)

Key to Changes: Delete, Add, Explanation

Group 1: Mission, Goals, Objectives, Outcomes Concepts

Goals
An identification of the ends to which the institutional mission is directed. A desire or ambition seeking to be accomplished. A goal is general in nature and typically not measurable. It may apply to an institution, program, et cetera.

Objectives
Specific means by which the institutional goals will be attained. An anticipated or intended result of an activity/set of activities that is specific and measurable. An objective communicates sought-after or desired result.

Outcomes
The expected results that should occur when the institution’s mission and goals are realized. A consequence or end-result of an activity/set of activities that has been measured and can be demonstrated to be the product of those activities. An outcome communicates demonstrated result.

Student Learning Objective
An anticipated or intended measurable result of a learning activities/set of activities describing what a student will know, be able to do, or believe/affirm.

Student Learning Outcomes
Expected impact that a program’s educational activities will have upon the student. A measured or demonstrated end-result of a learning activity/set of activities evidencing what a student knows, can do, or believes/affirms.

Program/Curricular Objectives
The expected student outcomes that will result upon completion of an academic program. An anticipated or intended result of completion of an academic program. Program objectives should be measurable and stated in terms of what a student completing the program will know, be able to do, or believe/feel.
**Course Objectives**
A statement of the expected benefits that a student will realize from a specific course. These outcomes should be expressed in terms of the student.

**Mission**
An institution’s purpose.

**Mission Statement**
A concise statement that expresses the institution’s intentions and context purpose, scope of operation or service context, and intended impact.

**Outcome Measurements**
The means used to determine whether a department, program or course is achieving its objectives.

**Group 2: Assessment and Student Achievement Concepts**

**Assessment**
An on-going effort to determine the institution or program’s effectiveness in meeting its goals and objectives.

**Completion Rates**
The percentage of students who complete their program within 150% of the normal (or expected) time for completion. See Graduation Rate.

**Graduation Rates**
The percentage required for disclosure under Student Right-to-Know and calculated by the total number of completers within 150% of normal time.
The percentage of students in a given cohort who complete their program within an expected period of time, typically 150% of the normal (or expected) published time required for a full-time student to complete all requirements for graduation for completion.

**Retention Rates**
The percentage of students who persist in their educational program, typically from first year of enrollment to the same period the following year.

**Group 3: Self-Study Documents**

**Annual Plan**
A written document that identifies the institution’s specific initiatives for one year.
**Compliance Document**
A self-study report based on research to provide evidence that the institution adequately meets the Commission’s accreditation Standards, that assesses the extent to which an institution satisfies the ABHE standards and essential elements. The compliance document describes how the institution satisfies the standards and references exhibits that document or evidence that the standards are being met. Where weaknesses exist, the compliance document accurately and candidly identifies those areas in need of improvement.

**Institutional Assessment Plan**
A written description of the institution’s ongoing assessment activities. The plan identifies instruments or collection methods employed, how and when assessment activities occur (cycles of assessment), how and when data analysis is done, and any achievement benchmarks that have been established. An institutional assessment plan is a required part of a COA accreditation self-study, but it should also be a living document updated regularly. The institutional assessment plan should provide the evidentiary basis that guides identification of strategies to be implemented through the institutional improvement plan. (For programmatic accreditation, this would be a Programmatic Assessment Plan—an assessment plan for accredited programs.)

**Programmatic Assessment Plan (for programmatic accreditation)**
A written description of the institution’s ongoing assessment activities for COA-accredited programs. The plan identifies instruments or collection methods employed, when assessment activities occur (cycles of assessment), how and when data analysis is done, and any achievement benchmarks that have been established. A programmatic assessment plan is a required part of a COA accreditation self-study for programmatic accreditation, but it should also be a living document updated regularly. The programmatic assessment plan should provide the evidentiary basis that guides identification of strategies to be implemented through the programmatic improvement plan.

**Long-Range Plan**
A written document that generally identifies the institution’s future initiatives for three or more years.

**Planning Document Institutional Improvement Plan**
A written description of the institution’s plans for the next three to five years, including timeframes, and strategies to achieve these plans, assignment of responsibilities for execution, and cost analysis for implementation. The plan is not limited to, but should intentionally address, weaknesses identified through self-study (compliance document findings) and ongoing assessment (institutional assessment plan findings), detailing strategies to address those weaknesses in the coming months or years. An institutional improvement plan is a required part of an ABHE accreditation self-study, but it should
also be a living document updated regularly. The institutional improvement plan should reference data and conclusions drawn from the institutional assessment plan, compliance document, or other research activities as the basis and rationale for implementing improvement strategies.

**Programmatic Improvement Plan (for programmatic accreditation)**

A written description of the institution’s plans for the next three to five years for COA-accredited programs, including timeframes, strategies to achieve these plans, assignment of responsibilities for execution, and cost analysis for implementation. The plan is not limited to, but should intentionally address, weaknesses identified through self-study (compliance document findings) and ongoing assessment (programmatic assessment plan findings), detailing strategies to address those weaknesses in the coming months or years. A programmatic improvement plan is a required part of a COA accreditation self-study for programmatic accreditation, but it should also be a living document updated regularly. The programmatic improvement plan should reference data and conclusions drawn from the programmatic assessment plan, compliance document, or other research activities as the basis and rationale for implementing improvement strategies.

**Strategic Plan**

A written document that identifies the means by which the institution’s goals will be realized, including time lines, cost analysis, actions to be completed, and person(s) charged with the execution of the tasks.

**Group 4: Standards**

**Conditions of Eligibility**

Twenty-two standards of the Commission for which compliance must be demonstrated. Foundational requirements which must be satisfied by an institution before applicant status will be granted. An institution must maintain compliance with the Conditions of Eligibility to remain an applicant, candidate, or accredited institution.

**Descriptive Standards**

Commission Standards that express the general characteristics of academic excellence and are designed to enable an institution to measure its educational effectiveness.

**Factors of Financial Stability**

A published standard developed by the Accrediting Commission to evaluate an institution’s fiscal stability.
Prescriptive Standards
Commission Standards that express specific characteristics of academic excellence and minimal expectations.

Group 5: Governance and Financial Documents

Enabling Documents
A written Constitution, Charter or Articles of Incorporation accompanied by Bylaws.

Bylaws
One of the institution’s two enabling documents, bylaws are a set of rules adopted by an institution to supplement its constitution and regulate its affairs. Bylaws establish process guidance for the effective governance of an institution and its operations.

Constitution, Charter or Articles of Incorporation
The primary institutional enabling document, the constitution is a written document that defines the purpose, sources of control, doctrinal position, and core values of an institution. It typically focuses on defining the institution and its members and has a rigorous amendment process. A constitution establishes an organization through self-declaration, where a charter establishes an organization through sovereign or government declaration.

External Financial Audit
A review of the institution’s financial records by a certified firm that includes an opinion statement. Audits submitted to the COA must include the management letter and be conducted according generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) or Canadian generally accepted auditing standards as a full financial audit (not a review or compilation).

Group 6: Off-Campus Locations

Additional Instruction Location
An off-campus location at which the institution offers at least 50% of an educational program. A facility that is geographically apart from the main campus of the institution and at which the institution offers at least 50% of a program through classroom courses, hybrid courses, or a combination of both. An additional location may qualify as a branch campus and be subject to requirements pertaining to branch campuses.

Branch Campus
A geographically separate unit with its own facilities, curricula, faculty and instructional resources but operated under the parent institution for the purpose of offering full
programs of study. An additional location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution and (1) is permanent in nature; (2) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; (3) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and (4) has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

**Extension Site/Center**
An off-campus location at which the institution offers less than 50% of an educational program where less than 50% of a degree program may be earned by classroom courses, hybrid courses, or a combination of both.

**External Degree Program**
A complete program of study that does not require extensive on-campus attendance.

**Group 7: Faculty Classifications**

**Faculty, Adjunct**  
_Normally_ Faculty serving in a temporary, or auxiliary, or occasional capacity to teach a specific course on a course-by-course basis, usually with no other faculty responsibilities.

**Faculty, Administrative**  
_Full-time_ Employees whose primary responsibility is administration but who also may teach.

**Faculty, Core**  
Faculty who are committed to the fulfillment of the institutional mission, responsible for the quality of academic functions, and involved in academic-related decision-making processes, whether teaching full-time or not.

**Faculty, Instructional**  
Full-time faculty whose primary responsibility in the institution is teaching.

**Faculty, Part-Time**  
Faculty members whose primary responsibility is not to the institution but who teach courses on a regular basis.

**Group 8: Teach-Out**

**Teach-Out**  
A process during which a program, institution, or institutional location that provides 100% of at least one program engages in an orderly closure or when, following the
closure of an institution or campus, another institution provides an opportunity for the students of the closed school to complete their program, regardless of their academic progress at the time of closure.

**Teach-Out Agreement**
A written agreement between institutions providing for one institution teaching out students from another institution where programs have been discontinued or the institution has closed. A written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 100% of at least one program offered, ceases to operate or plans to cease operations before all enrolled students have completed their program of study.

**Teach-Out Plan**
A proposed plan for enrolled students at an institution discontinuing programs or closing to complete comparable degrees or programs without hardship at another institution. A written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 100% of at least one program, ceases to operate or plans to cease operations before all enrolled students have completed their program of study.

**Group 9: Other Glossary Definitions**

**Catalog (Academic Catalog)**
A published document (electronic and/or paper) that delineates the institution's governance, mission, institutional goals, specific objectives, academic program requirements and courses, learning and educational resources, admissions policies and standards, nondiscrimination statement, rules and regulations for conduct, full- and part-time faculty rosters with faculty degrees, fees and other charges, refund policies, a policy defining satisfactory academic progress, and other items related to attending, transferring to, or withdrawing from the institution. The catalog is a static document governing requirements and policies for a designated period of time (typically one or two academic years), and therefore, should not be updated at will. An electronic copy of the catalog is to be submitted to the ABHE Commission office annually.

**Credit Hour**
A unit of measure representing the traditional academic value of learning activities. A semester credit hour represents 37.5 hours or more of academic engagement in instructor-designated learning activities for the average student (traditionally, a minimum of 50 minutes of instruction per week over a 15-week period, supplemented by two hours of preparation for each hour of instruction). for the average student; or the
equivalent amount of time (37.5 hours) in instructor designated learning activities. A quarter credit hour represents 25 hours or more of academic engagement in instructor-designated learning activities for the average student (traditionally, a minimum of 50 minutes of instruction per week over a 10-week period, supplemented by two hours of preparation for each hour of instruction) for the average student; or the equivalent amount of time (25 hours) in instructor designated learning activities. A quarter credit hour is equivalent to 2/3 of a semester credit hour. Time for final examinations is outside these specifications. The assignment of credit hours may be based on intended learning outcomes, verified through student achievement, that the institution determines are reasonably equivalent to a credit hour of student work.

**Gifted Students**
A student whose past academic performance is recognized to be superior.

**Ministry Formation**
An applied ministry requirement (credit or non-credit) that is viewed as an integral part of the student’s educational program and results in the formation of the student’s philosophy of ministry, commitment to ministry, and hands-on competency in ministry skills.

**Preaccreditation (Candidate Status)**
The status of accreditation and public recognition that a nationally recognized accrediting agency grants to an institution or program for a limited period of time that signifies the agency has determined that the institution or program is progressing toward full accreditation and is likely to attain full accreditation before the expiration of that limited period of time.