

Evaluating Education – Accreditation & State Board Rules

MODERATOR:

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PANELISTS:

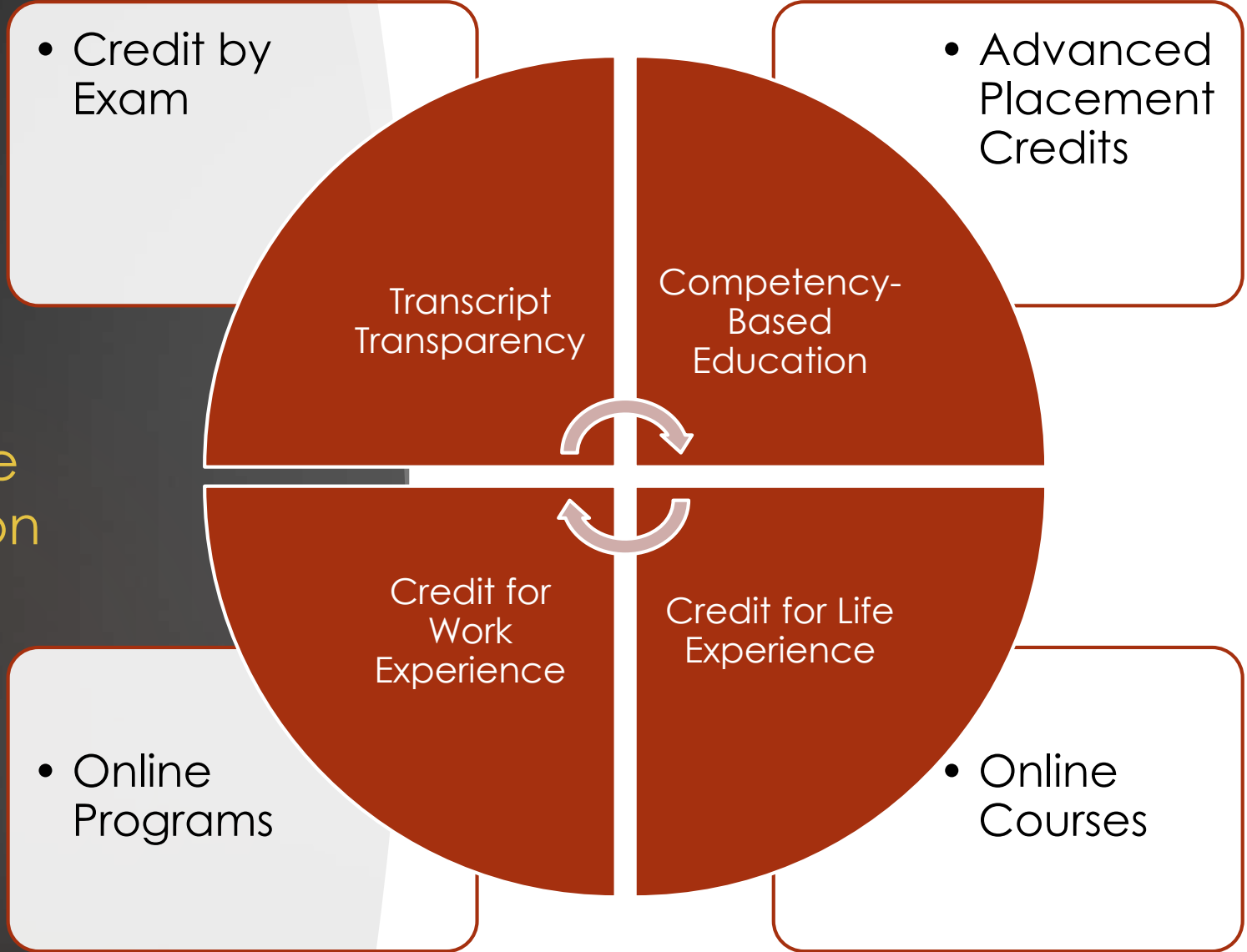
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Agenda: Commitment to State Boards

- ▶ NASBA and AICPA Commitment to Accreditation (Johnson)
- ▶ New Age Education (Johnson)
- ▶ Accreditation as Academic Peer Review (Hinson)
- ▶ Learning from Other Professions (Williams)
- ▶ Current NASBA/AICPA Project (Williams)
- ▶ Obstacles to Overcome (Williams)
- ▶ Future Plans and Timeline (Johnson)

New Age Education



- Credit by Exam

- Advanced Placement Credits

- Online Programs

- Online Courses

New Age Education, Continued

- Advanced Coursework at Community Colleges

Use of CPA Exam Materials

Credit for CPA Review Courses

- Earning a Master's degree without a Bachelor's degree

Unclear Transfer Credit Practices

Expansion of Co-ops and Internships

- International Credits

- Unclear Quality Control by Accreditors



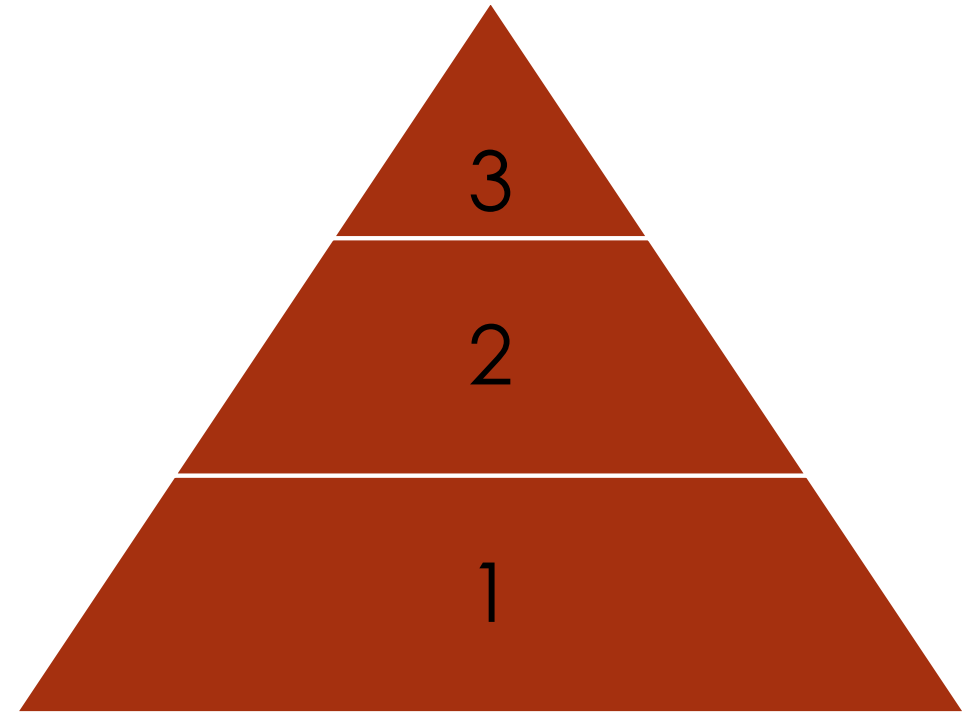
Levels of Accreditation

Regional

- ▶ Focus at the institutional level

Program

- ▶ Focus at the business or accounting program level



Regional Accreditation Purpose

- ▶ Voluntary peer reviewed means by which colleges demonstrate to each other, and to employers and licensing agencies, that their credits and degrees meet minimum standards.
- ▶ Regionals are gatekeepers and responsible for the federal regulation (Title IV Funding)

Regions: Six Regions (Seven Agencies)

- ▶ Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
 - ▶ Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
 - ▶ Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
 - ▶ New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
 - ▶ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
 - ▶ Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
 - ▶ Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)
- ▶ Regional Process
 - ▶ Self-study
 - ▶ Site visit (team of peers)
 - ▶ Boards/commissions make the final decision (Yes/No)
 - ▶ Re-evaluation every 5-10 years

Boards of Accountancy Context

- ▶ BOA rules related to Accreditation vary by state
 - ▶ As approved/recognized/accepted by board: **21**
 - ▶ Regional accreditation: **19**
 - ▶ Regional and/or national: **11**
 - ▶ An accredited institution: **4**
- ▶ Heavy reliance on regional accreditation
- ▶ Wording vague, unclear what is intended



Program Accreditation Purpose

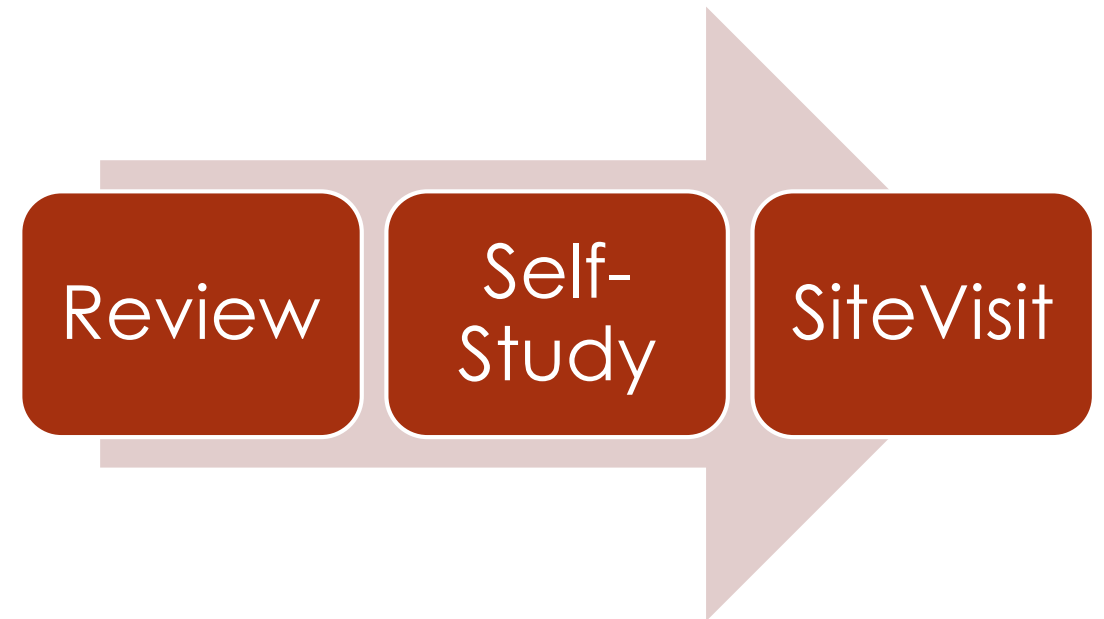
- ▶ Business program accreditation is a voluntary process that includes an external peer review of a business school's ability to provide high quality business education and programs.
- ▶ The process is a comprehensive review of a school's mission, faculty qualifications, and curricula.
- ▶ All degree programs within the business school are reviewed.

Major Business/ Accounting Accreditation Organizations

1. Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International)
2. Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)
3. International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE)

Program Accreditation Process

- ▶ Must already have regional accreditation
- ▶ Detailed business/accounting program review
- ▶ Self-study
- ▶ Site visit (team of peers)
- ▶ Boards/committees make the final decision
- ▶ Re-evaluation every 5 – 10 years



Other Professions

Fields Contacted

- ▶ Engineering
- ▶ Nursing
- ▶ Architecture
- ▶ Psychology

Similar to Accounting

- ▶ Engineering
- ▶ Architecture

Engineering

- ▶ Program accreditation is by ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology)
- ▶ ABET is not required, but almost
- ▶ Exceptions from non-ABET schools are rare
- ▶ Alternative path includes
 - ▶ Endorsement by ABET-appointed representative
 - ▶ Five references supporting candidate's work experience
 - ▶ Final decision by engineering board
- ▶ No reliance on regional accreditation



Architecture

- ▶ National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) accredits architecture programs in U.S.
- ▶ Architecture is highly structured five-year program
- ▶ All 54 licensing boards accept NAAB accredited degree
- ▶ 37 boards require a NAAB accredited degree
- ▶ Most common model is for school to have both regional and NAAB accreditation
- ▶ Exceptions from non-NAAB schools are rare
- ▶ No reliance on regional accreditation



NASBA/AICPA project began in late 2015

Washington DC
summit/forum in
February 2016

--NASBA/AICPA

--Program accreditors

--Regional accreditors

--Others (e.g., AAA)

- ▶ Identification of 14 issues that reflect
 - ▶ Changes in higher education
 - ▶ Problems for state boards

- ▶ Current status of project
 - ▶ Established priorities on the issues (H/M/L)
 - ▶ Assessing where control should exist
 - ▶ Regional accreditation
 - ▶ Program accreditation
 - ▶ State board rules

NASBA/AICPA Matrix Summary

High Priority Items

| | REGIONAL ACCREDIT | PROGRAM ACCREDIT | STATE BOARDS |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| -Transcript transparency | 1 | -- | 2 |
| -Transfer credit practices | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| -Credit for life/work exp. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| -Credit by examination | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| -Online course/programs | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| -Require regional accredit.* | -- | 1 | 2 |

*Equivalent to regional if outside U.S.

1 = First priority for quality assurance

2 = Second priority for quality assurance

3 = Third priority for quality assurance

NASBA/AICPA Matrix Summary

Other Items

| | REGIONAL ACCREDIT | PROGRAM ACCREDIT | STATE BOARDS |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| -Competency-based work | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| -Quality control | -- | 1 | 2 |
| -Use of CPA review material | -- | 1 | 2 |
| -Masters without UG degree | -- | 1 | 2 |
| -Co-op/internships credit | -- | -- | 1 |
| -Advanced courses at community colleges | -- | -- | 1 |
| -CPA review hours cap | -- | -- | 1 |

1 = First priority for quality assurance

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3 = Third priority for quality assurance

Obstacles to Overcome

- ▶ Convincing state boards that regional accreditation is not sufficient
- ▶ Lack of responsiveness of regional accreditors to needs of state boards
- ▶ Continuous evolution of accounting programs and higher education
- ▶ Diversity among regional accreditors
- ▶ Wide variation in program accreditors
 - ▶ Quality
 - ▶ Rigor
 - ▶ Frequency

Expected Outcomes

- ▶ Areas for reliance on regional accreditation
- ▶ Areas for reliance on program accreditation
 - ▶ Determination of which program accreditations are reliable
- ▶ Areas for state boards to control
 - ▶ Disallow
 - ▶ Limit number of hours

Anticipated Timeline

November 4th , 2016

- ▶ AICPA – NASBA Accreditation Task Force to develop recommendations for various accrediting associations

February 3rd , 2017

- ▶ Meeting with various accreditors to share Task Force's concerns

April 2017

- ▶ Finalize and submit final recommendations to the AICPA – NASBA UAA Committee

Questions and Discussion