

A Letter on Accreditor Dashboards

**Third Way**

Dr. Michelle Asha Cooper
National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Dr. Cooper:

This letter is submitted on behalf of the 12 undersigned organizations to commend the US Department of Education (Department) on reinstating the accreditor dashboards for use by the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) within its recommendation process. NACIQI plays an important role in the accrediting agency recognition process and identified several years ago that quantitative data, presented in dashboards, could help it make better decisions. We are pleased to see the Department's renewed recognition of the importance of data in accreditation.

Returning to a review process that is enhanced with data on how students fare at accredited colleges and universities will give NACIQI a fuller picture on whether accreditors are following through on the job they've been tasked with—ensuring educational quality at institutions of higher education.¹ Specifically, dashboards can help answer critical questions about whether students at accredited institutions are receiving a quality postsecondary educational experience such as: (1) are they likely to graduate; (2) will their institution provide fruitful future employment opportunities; and (3) will they be able to pay down their educational debt after they complete. They also highlight whether institutions and accreditors are good stewards of taxpayer dollars. In short, dashboards provide a snapshot of how well an accreditors' portfolio of schools performs for students.

When used well and consistently, dashboards also can demonstrate accreditor performance over time for NACIQI members. Indicators can show whether institutions serve students well on the identified metrics, and whether they have improved or regressed during the specified period. This kind of trend data are critical supplements to the narrative information provided to Committee members through staff reports. Together, a dashboard's quantitative data and the qualitative data of the staff reports offer a clearer, more comprehensive picture of an accrediting agency's performance than either could provide alone.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Department to ensure that the accreditor recognition process takes into account whether institutions are producing strong outcomes for the students who pursue postsecondary credentials and the taxpayers who entrust the federal government with the responsibility of distributing billions in educational subsidies each year.

Sincerely,

AccuRounds

Center for American Progress

Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

Higher Learning Advocates

Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

National Association for College Admission Counseling

New America

The Education Trust

The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)

Third Way

Veterans Education Success

Young Invincibles

CC: Members, National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity

TOPICS

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ENDNOTES

1. Acosta, Alejandra. ED Should Revive NACIQI's Accreditor Dashboards.
<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/ed-should-revive-naciqi-accreditor-dashboards/>. 8 July 2021.