

ACCE Guidance Committee

Best Practices Task Force

Best Practice No. 2 (February 2007)

Possible Weakness / Undeveloped Potential

The Industry Advisory Committee “lacks structure”, “does not maintain consistent relationship with the Program”, “does not meet regularly”, etc.

Justification

Programs must show that their Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) is actively involved in an advisory role. The IAC must consist of representatives from the construction industry and be representative of the potential employers for that program. The IAC should meet a minimum of once a year (Document 102). Additionally, the Program should maintain continuous liaison with various constituencies that it serves. Fifty programs were evaluated by the ACCE from February 2002 through July 2005. Visiting Team reports from these visits cited 164 weaknesses, of which a number were attributed to the “Industry” section of the standards.

Data

In order to help address this weakness in accredited programs and to prepare candidate programs for success, a survey was conducted to identify characteristics of IAC interaction/operation among the accredited programs. The sample consisted of 30 respondents and the data is partitioned into three groups – all respondents, that portion indicating that their IAC was listed as a strength, and that portion indicating that their IAC was not listed as a strength during the last accreditation visit. Using the data collected in this survey, the following table was constructed to identify possible patterns between the groups.

Characteristic	Program Category		
	ALL	IACs AS STRENGTHS	IACs NOT LISTED AS STRENGTHS
Percentage of Programs Reporting that their IACs are Involved in Development/Review of Program Outcomes	80%	86%	63%
Percentage of Programs Reporting that their IACs are Given Feedback on Quality Improvement Measures	87%	91%	75%
Percentage of Programs Reporting that Over 80% of IAC Members Employ their Graduates	50%	86%	25%
Percentage of Programs Reporting that Their IAC meets 2 or more Times per Year	77%	82%	63%
Percentage of Programs Reporting that Communicate with IACs between Meetings	70%	82%	50%
Percentage of Programs Reporting that Agendas are Sent Before Meetings	87%	91%	75%
Percentage of Programs Reporting that Meetings are Documented through Minutes	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of Programs Reporting that Minutes are sent to IAC members	87%	95%	63%
Percentage of Programs Reporting that IAC members are Given Opportunity to Assess its Operation	76%	86%	38%
Percentage of Programs Reporting that IAC members Help/Support Student Club Activities	87%	95%	63%
Percentage of Programs Reporting that IAC members Assist Program with Fundraising	77%	82%	63%

Results

Candidate and other programs should consider the following when creating, adjusting, or supplementing the operation and composition of their Industry Advisory Committee.

- Active participation, good communication, and substantial collaboration are indicators of a strong and beneficial relationship between programs and IACs.
- Programs where IACs have been found to be a “strength” in the most recent visiting team report appear to have much higher rates of “active participation” in a variety of program activities. “Strong” IACs are involved in developing program outcomes, feedback on quality improvement measures, support for student club activities, committee assessment and fundraising at consistently higher rates than programs having IACs that were not listed as a strength.
- Programs where IACs have been found to be a “strength” in the most recent visiting team report appear to have much higher rates of “communication”. While the ACCE requires that IACs meet at least once annually, 82% of the programs having “strong” IACs report meeting at least twice per year. Communication between IAC meetings occurs at higher rate among programs with “strong” IACs. In addition, programs having “strong” IACs actively communicate pre- and post-meeting through the sending of agendas and minutes.
- Programs where IACs have been found to be a “strength” in the most recent visiting team report also have a high percentage of graduate employers on their IAC. Almost 7 out of 8 programs with “strong” IACs reported that at least 80% of their committee members were graduate employers. This interdependency between the employer-laden IACs and the program reinforces collaboration on curriculum matters, research, and other activities.

Suggested Reading

Burt, R., Smith, J. C., & Mayfield, J. (2006). Benchmarking industry advisory committees. *ASC Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Conference*, Fort Collins, Colorado.