

The Manual of Procedure for the Education & Accreditation Committee of AIChE

December, 2005

I. Overview of the Education & Accreditation Committee and Accreditation

The AIChE has established the Education & Accreditation (E&A) Committee with *Roles and Responsibilities* as follows:

“This committee serves (a) as the Institute's authority on the status of chemical engineering education; (b) advises schools on methods and standards of chemical engineering education; and (c) inspects and evaluates chemical engineering programs for ABET. This committee is authorized to cooperate with other inspecting and accrediting agencies under agreements ratified by the Board of Directors.”

In practice this committee devotes most of its efforts to the accreditation process, helping to ensure that it is well understood and that it is applied in a manner that is consistent with the Criteria for Accrediting Programs as set forth by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). AIChE played a major role in the formation of the original engineering education accreditation organization, the Engineering Council for Professional Development (ECPD), in the 1930's, having already initiated its own accreditation activities. The E&A Committee has the responsibility for maintaining that legacy.

II. Goals and Objectives of the E&A Committee

Consistent with its *Roles and Responsibilities*, the goal of the E&A Committee to work closely with the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of ABET in setting and implementing accreditation policy. Members of the E&A Committee seek to understand the latest trends in chemical engineering practice and education and to implement accreditation procedures that satisfy the needs and expectations of the chemical engineering profession. In so doing, members of the E&A Committee participate, along with representatives of the other engineering disciplines, to set accreditation policy that is consistent for the entire engineering profession. In addition, the E&A Committee sets specific accreditation criteria that apply for chemical engineering programs.

An important goal is to help the chemical engineering profession appreciate the latest accreditation procedures and to respond carefully to criticisms through internal actions and in close cooperation with the EAC of ABET. Another goal is to train program evaluators and to provide consistent interpretations of their

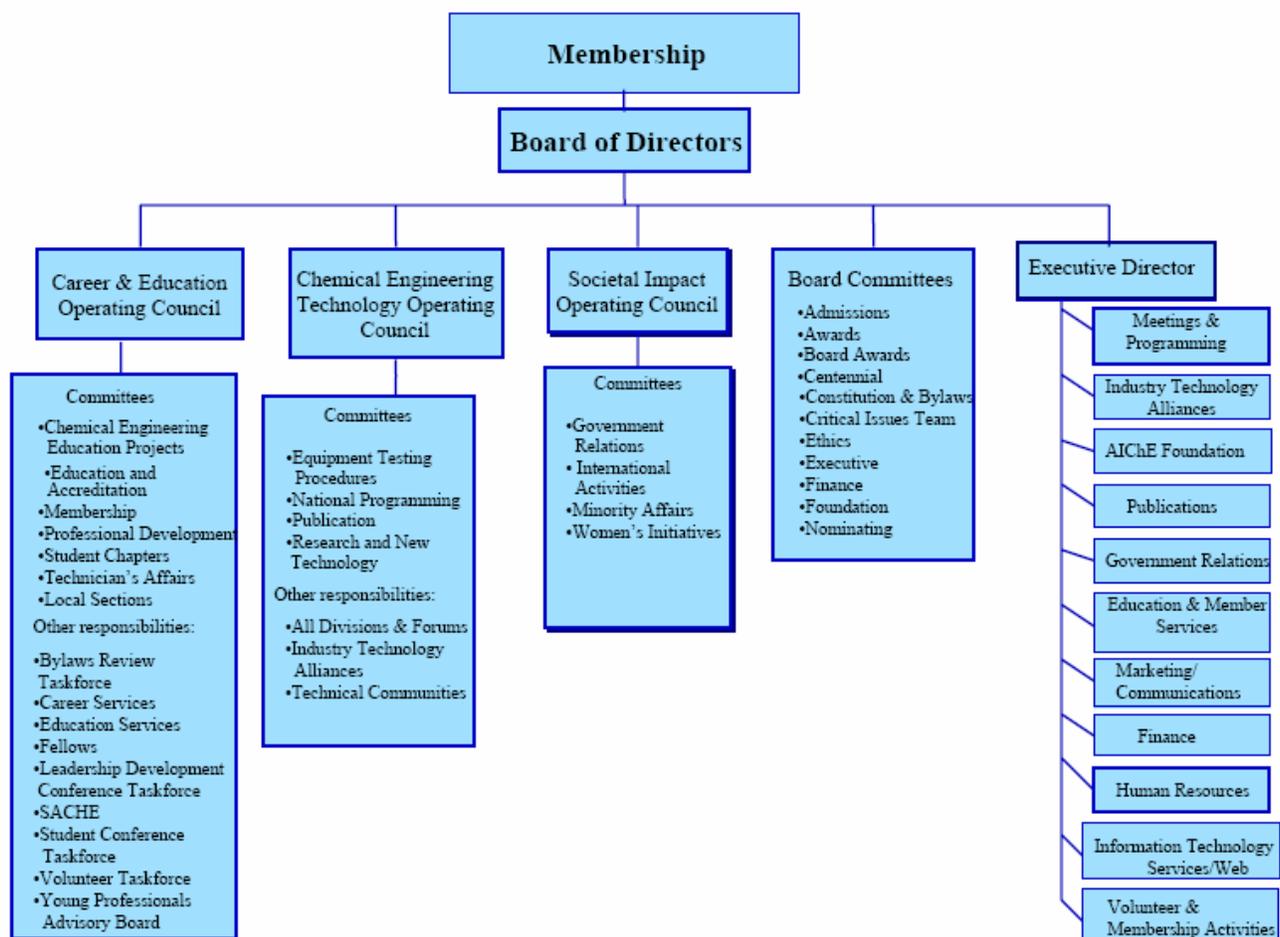
findings in line with the diverse population of chemical engineering departments that seek accreditation – upholding accreditation standards, while avoiding strict, narrow interpretations – emphasizing that the primary role of accreditation is to insure minimum standards in engineering programs.

Finally, a goal is to help chemical engineering departments prepare for accreditation visits in ways that improve their programs without excessive effort – avoiding the excessive use of surveys and documentation to justify improvements in their programs.

III. Organization Within AIChE and ABET

A. AIChE

Eighteen technical and twenty-five national divisions comprise AIChE (<http://www.aiche.org>). Below is an organizational chart of the Institute. Under the Board of Directors are three operating councils. The Career and Education Operating Council (CEO) is composed of 25 national committees, two of which



address educational issues. One of these committees is the **Chemical Engineering Education Projects Committee**.

It operates to:

- initiate, stimulate, and receive suggestions for important projects of general interest and value to chemical engineering education.
- promote such projects, or recommend to the Board of Directors that arrangements be made to do so.

The second is the **Education and Accreditation Committee**. Its function and goals are described in Section II.

B. ABET

ABET, Inc. is recognized as the U. S. accreditation authority for college and university programs in applied science, computing, engineering and technology. ABET (<http://www.abet.org>) is a federation of 30 professional and technical societies representing the fields of applied science, computing, engineering and technology.

The major parts of ABET are:

- The Board of Directors

The primary responsibilities of the Board of Directors are to set policy and approve accreditation criteria.

The number of directors from a particular society is based on the number of accredited programs. Currently two members of the E&A Committee represent the AIChE on the Board.

A director can serve two successive 3 year terms.

- Commissions

ABET is made up of four commissions. These commissions implement accreditation procedures and decisions. Commissions are also responsible for developing accreditation actions. These actions must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Commission members, (who serve as chairs of accreditation teams) and program evaluators (who are provided by the professional societies), comprise the accreditation teams. These teams conduct on-campus accreditation visits to evaluate programs seeking accreditation. The four Commissions are:

1. Applied Science and Accreditation Commission (ASAC)

There are no AIChE representatives on the ASAC.

2. Computing Accreditation Commission (CAC)

There are no AIChE representatives on the CAC.

3. Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC)

The number of commissioners from a particular society is determined by the number of accredited programs. Currently four members of the E&A Committee sit on the EAC. Their terms are five years. An EAC alternate is also designated from the E&A Committee. It is customary for the EAC members to be active members of the E&A committee, although it is not strictly required. Each commission member is expected to be a team chair for an accreditation visit at least once a year.

The E&A committee develops recommendations on accreditation actions for chemical engineering programs. These recommendations are shared with the EAC by the AIChE commissioners.

4. Technology Accreditation Commission (TAC)

AIChE has one representative and an alternate on the TAC.

- Councils

Councils include the Industrial Advisory Council, whose members represent the major industries ABET serves, the Accreditation Council, whose members are the leaders of ABET's four commissions; and the International Activities Council (INTAC), whose members are current and former board and commission members.

- Committees

Permanent and ad hoc committees address a variety of issues, including diversity, governance, strategic planning and finance.

ABET has three sources of income:

- Accreditation and maintenance fees from universities

Universities get charged a fee for an accreditation visit. The fee for 2005/6 is \$2783 for the team chair plus \$2783 for each program evaluator (PEV). There are also add-ons if there are multiple sites to visit, etc. If the university is only submitting a report (interim report action) the fee is \$1500.

There is also an annual maintenance fee which is \$247 base charge plus \$247 per accredited program. University fees total around 3.2 M\$ (about 900 K\$ is maintenance).

- Director and curricular fees from professional societies

Professional societies get charged \$15,700 for each director plus \$227 per program for which that society is the lead. For AIChE we have two directors plus responsibilities for 160 programs. Hence the fee in 2005/06 is \$67,720. Professional society fees total around 1.2M\$.

- Other income such as international activities, credential service, meeting income, publications and investment income

Total projected revenue for 2005/6 is 5.M\$. In 2005/2006 ABET is projected to operate at a slight deficit.

IV. Responsibilities of the E&A Committee

A. Mentoring and Training of Program Evaluators

The evaluation and inspection of chemical engineering programs are accomplished through program evaluators (PEV's) who are selected, trained, and mentored by the E&A Committee. The selection of PEV's is described in Section IV-B-2.

All PEV's must be trained according to ABET policy before they are approved to evaluate an engineering program. The E&A Committee has the responsibility within AIChE for conducting training programs, using ABET prepared training materials, on behalf of ABET. These training programs are one-day-long events and usually are conducted during an Annual Meeting by members of the E&A Committee who are also members of the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of ABET. Individuals who attend the training sessions receive a certificate from AIChE.

A significant part of training is participation as an Observer in a regular ABET accreditation visit to an institution. An individual must participate as an Observer before being approved for PEV status by the E&A Committee. At this time, there are no AIChE funds to support travel costs for an Observer. Therefore, where possible, an Observer will be assigned to an institution close to his or her home.

The E&A Committee members are available to mentor the PEV's who have been approved by the Committee. Periodically, additional training of approved PEV's may be conducted to improve consistency of recommended accreditation actions.

B. Defining Program Criteria

Criterion 8 of ABET's Criteria for Accrediting Engineering Programs specify that:

“Each program must satisfy applicable Program Criteria (if any). Program Criteria provide the specificity needed for interpretation of the basic level criteria as applicable to a given discipline. ...”

The E&A Committee has the responsibility to develop the criteria for the programs where AIChE is designated as the Lead Society.

Recommendations of new Program Criteria are developed by the Committee and then sent forward to the Career & Education Operating Council for approval. The Council, after approval, then submits the Program Criteria to the AIChE Board of Directors for approval. After Board Approval the Program Criteria are then forwarded to ABET for the approval process of that organization.

Briefly, the Criteria Committee of the Engineering Accreditation Commission considers the program criteria and recommends approved versions to the full EAC. The EAC then upon approval forwards the new criteria to the ABET Board of Directors. The Board first gives preliminary approval then the new Program Criteria are published one year prior to final implementation to allow for review and comment by institutions and other interested parties.

C. Nominating EAC Representatives

As noted in Section III.2, the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of ABET is one of four accreditation commissions of that organization. The EAC has responsibility of evaluating and rendering accreditation decisions for engineering programs. These evaluations and decisions are based on policies, procedures and criteria that have been approved by the ABET Board of Directors. The EAC decisions are final, except for appeals of "not to accredit" actions.

The E&A Committee nominates the EAC representatives from among the E&A Committee membership. The nominees must have experience as a Program Evaluator for chemical engineering programs. Normally, each EAC commissioner serves for a five year term and the terms of the four members are staggered to help ensure continuity of experience.

D. Ensuring Consistency of Recommended Actions

The E&A Committee reviews all recommended accreditation actions for chemical engineering programs each year. The purpose of this review process is to ensure that like shortcomings result in the same accreditation action for all programs.

The E&A Committee meets annually just prior to the meeting of the EAC (usually in July) to review recommended accreditation actions by each accreditation team. The E&A Committee makes an independent accreditation action recommendation based on information which was developed by the PEV assigned to the chemical engineering program. If the E&A Committee recommendation differs from that of the accreditation team the procedure described in Section V – C is followed to obtain a change from the original accreditation action by the EAC.

V. *Roles of the E&A Committee Members*

There a number of different roles that must be fulfilled by E&A committee members if the committee is to function effectively.

A. **Committee Chair**

The E & A Committee elects from its membership a chair who agrees to serve for an unspecified number of years. He or she must have sufficient experience in the workings of the committee to effectively lead it in fulfilling its responsibilities as discussed in the previous section as well as to be its primary interface with the CEOC of AIChE and the ABET office. Prior to 2004, the AIChE employed a Director of Education Activities whose office performed the function of interface with ABET and kept records of all accreditation activities. The chair of E&A now performs that function as well as the following:

1. Committee Leadership - The E&A chair sets the time and agenda for all committee meetings and brings ideas and recommendations for future directions and activities to the committee. He or she works with the committee members to develop appropriate responses to these ideas and recommendations. Liaison with the CEOC and with various committees of ABET is a necessary part of the development of new directions and activities.

2. Training and Membership - The E&A chair makes recommendations for new members and new Program Evaluators (PEV's) and keeps records of the status of all members and evaluators. The chair could form a committee to perform these functions.

3. Committee Meetings - The E&A chair organizes the meetings of the committee, usually one at the annual AIChE meeting in November and one just before the ABET EAC meeting in July. The chair develops the agenda and keeps the minutes of the meetings unless other members of the committee are appointed to these tasks.

4. Committee Communications

The E&A chair must function as a hub of communication for the committee, which is made convenient by the use of conference calls, email and attachments.

5. Evaluator Assignments - Each evaluation cycle the E&A chair assigns the evaluators for the chemical engineering programs to be evaluated. ABET provides the list of programs requesting visits and the visit dates determined by the assigned team chairs. The E&A chair uses the ABET website software to make the evaluator assignments. Direct contact with the visit team chair is sometimes necessary. The E&A chair must make sure all evaluators submit to ABET new biographical data each cycle in order to be able to assign them. These assignments usually begin in April or May and continue until complete, hopefully by August, since visits occur in the September to December months. In addition to the evaluators, the E&A chair assigns a liaison from the E&A committee to each evaluator to help in difficult situations and to keep track of the evaluation process.

B. Committee Members

1. Membership - New E&A members are elected by the current E&A Committee. E&A Committee members are AIChE members who have served as PEVs for several years and have expressed interest in serving as E&A members. The term of membership is indefinite, but each member is expected to serve on the Committee for at least ten years.

2. Meetings Attendance - E&A members are expected to make every effort to attend the summer meeting in Washington; and if possible, also attend the E&A Committee meeting at the Annual National AIChE meeting.

E&A members are expected to participate in all additional Committee discussions, either in person or via remote electronic means, concerning program criteria and other issues of interest to the Committee.

3. Responsibilities - It is the responsibility of each member to help the E&A Committee to accomplish its objectives, as described in Section IV-A. E&A members are expected to:

- serve as Program Evaluators (PEV) at least once a year as described in section IV-D.

- serve as Liaisons whenever necessary as described in Section IV-D. The roles and responsibilities of the liaison are listed in Section IV-D-1. Furthermore, in the Recommendations Consistency meeting each summer, the liaison acts as the representative of the PEV and the school to present

and discuss any issues regarding the recommendation for that school. Therefore, the liaison should ask the evaluator to send the final version of the evaluation report including the worksheet and any changes in action after the due process period. It is the responsibility of the Liaison to review these documents and be prepared for the Consistency discussions. If the Liaison identifies problems that could cause a discussion at the summer E&A meeting, the Liaison should send the final version of the report to the other members of E&A to inform them in advance of the possible issues.

- serve as representatives to EAC, when nominated by the Committee, as described in Section III.

- help with the PEV training program when necessary, as described in Section IV-A-1.

4. Communications - E&A members, in accomplishing every responsibility described above should follow the prescribed communications and keep the Committee members informed.

VI. Roles and Responsibilities of the Program Evaluator (PEV)

As noted in Section V, the PEV's are selected, trained and assigned by the E&A committee. The PEV's primary roles are to assess a program based on the accreditation criteria and to document the assessment.

An effective evaluator interacts timely and professionally with all those involved in the process. These include the E&A liaison, the program head at the school evaluated, the team chair, and any observers assigned to a visit.

This section covers the keys to effective interactions and describes the expected communications and documentation from a program evaluator.

A. Interactions with Liaison

The liaisons for each school are assigned by the E&A chair and communicated to the evaluators before the visits.

The main roles of the liaisons are to counsel the evaluators and to help ensure consistency across chemical engineering programs. The activities of the liaisons include:

- Contacting the program evaluator before the visit
- Previewing the self-studies and providing initial feedback to the evaluator
- Assisting and mentoring the evaluator as needed throughout the process
- Reviewing the documentation provided by the evaluator
- Presenting any key issues from the assessment to the E&A Committee

It is the responsibility of the evaluator to contact the liaisons with any issues for which he or she needs assistance on issues specific to chemical engineering programs. The evaluator should contact the team chair on general questions concerning the visit, accreditation policy, general criteria, etc.

If the liaisons do not contact the evaluator in a timely manner, then the evaluator should initiate contact with the liaisons. The evaluator should contact the E&A chair if there are any problems with contacting the liaisons.

B. Interaction with the Visited ChE Program Chairman

The program chair is the point contact for the evaluator on campus. In some cases, the point of contact for the visit is not the department chair. The Team Chair should be able to provide the appropriate contact point for a particular program.

The evaluator should contact the program chairman or designated contact as soon as cleared to do so by the team chair. While the team chair will establish the overall agenda for the visit, the evaluator sets the framework for the specific program.

Before the visit the evaluator should establish with the program chair the:

- List of faculty to interview
- Mix of students to see and in what venue
- Location and content of program specific documentation
- Labs to visit
- Overall timing (within bounds set by the team chair)

The evaluator should also ask questions about information missing or unclear in the self-study. If additional information is needed, ask the program chair to have it available on campus during the visit. The team chair should be copied on all correspondence with the program chair.

The evaluator should not give any indication of likely recommendations before the visit.

During the visit the evaluator should keep the program chair and team chair informed of any issues or data needs as they arise.

The de-brief with the program chair on the last day is intended to set the stage for the final report to the administration as well as to provide any helpful feedback that is not formally reported.

After the visit the evaluator should thank the program chair. The formal communications on visit findings are handled through the team chair and the

EAC. In most cases, no further interactions with the program chair are required. The team chair will guide as needed during due process.

C. Interactions with Team Chair

The team chair leads and organizes the visit. The team chair is also responsible for handling post-visit documentation and follow-ups.

The team chair will contact the evaluator as soon as practical before the visit to confirm availability on the proposed visit dates. The team chair will also ask about any potential conflicts of interest and clear those with the school and with the EAC.

Before the visit the team chair will:

- Confirm availability and address potential conflicts of interest
- Confirm contact information
- Establish overall plan, agenda, and logistics for the visit
- Provide guidance on how communications will be managed within the team and with the school
- Request that self-studies and transcripts be sent to the evaluators
- Assign visits to the support departments (may be done at the first team meeting)
- Work with the evaluators to establish additional information needs

The evaluator should copy the team chair on any correspondence with the school and be proactive in identifying any issues or information needs.

The evaluator is also expected to confirm and to communicate travel arrangements early with the team chair.

During the visit the evaluator should provide the pre-visit documentation to the team chair during the initial meeting. The team chair will hold meetings every day to ensure alignment among the team members on logistics, issues, and findings. The team chair will normally expect a draft of the statement and program audit forms during the early morning of the final day and to have the final documentation before leaving campus.

It is expected that the evaluator will work with the team chair to achieve consensus on the findings for all programs.

After the visit the team chair will ask for clarifications, if required, in preparing the due process statement. After the school responds, the team chair may request further assistance from the evaluator in determining if certain shortcomings have been addressed satisfactorily.

Note that many team chairs will not request further assistance. In addition, it is possible that an evaluator's recommendation will be changed during the editing cycle. Such a change is generally done for consistency. If an evaluator feels that such a change is unwarranted, then the team chair and liaison should be contacted.

D. Interactions with the Observer

A new ChE evaluator must serve as an observer before being assigned to a visit. In addition, the state professional engineering societies frequently provide an observer. An observer is not allowed to communicate findings to the school.

The team chair will notify the team of any observers. A ChE observer accompanies the evaluator during the visit and is generally given tasks to help spread the work load. The evaluator serves to mentor the observer.

A state board observer normally works out a schedule with the team chair and may accompany multiple evaluators.

Before the visit the evaluator should contact the ChE observer to provide an overview of the visit and to align roles.

During the visit the evaluator should introduce the observer as appropriate on campus and split the work duties as appropriate. The observer should be encouraged to ask questions and to make suggestions to the team, but not to the school representatives.

After the visit the evaluator should follow-up with the observer to check for feedback and potential questions.

E. Communication and Documentation

EAC has moved over the past few years to a document by exception basis for the draft statements. While this has streamlined the overall process and provided more focus on the shortcomings, the consequence is a less complete picture of the overall program quality. As such, the quality checks within the AIChE and the EAC have less information for their consistency evaluations.

It is critical that the evaluator provide timely and complete documentation to the team chair and to the liaison. It is recommended that the evaluator provide more thorough documentation of potential shortcomings to the liaisons after the visit, particularly for any borderline issues. As most of the rework in the editing and consistency processes is associated with Criteria 2 and 3 issues, any additional information that helps clarify the situation on campus will be useful.

The expected communication and documentation includes:

- Visit plan confirmed with team chair
- Agenda confirmed with program chair
- Pre-visit issues identified with the team chair and liaisons
- Follow-up documentation of issues and recommendations with the liaisons

The keys to success are (1) early and consistent communications, (2) thorough preparations, and (3) clear and complete documentation of any issues.

F. Financial Responsibilities

1. The Visit - ABET PEVs are reimbursed by ABET for their travel to perform accreditation activities. This includes air travel, hotel, meals, and incidentals. After the visit dates are set, the Team Chair will identify the logistics for the trip, including the preferred hotel where the team will be staying. You (the PEV) will need to make a hotel reservation fairly early with your personal credit card, usually about one month before the visit to ensure the hotel has space. Then you need to begin making travel arrangements to go to the University, including a rental car if necessary. Air travel is preferably arranged through Travel Incorporated, operated by Regina Downey (1-800-922-2387), who handles all ABET travel. The air tickets are charged directly to ABET when they use this service. Tickets are electronic and your itinerary is emailed to you. It may take several tries to contact one of their travel agents personally, even when you leave a message. If you choose not to use ABET, you can charge the ticket on your credit card and get reimbursed after the visit.

After the visit is completed, you will need to use the travel spreadsheet on the ABET website, which electronically calculates all totals and queries you for missing information. For unusual expenditures, you will need to provide additional comments/justification. You should produce a signed paper copy, which then must be mailed to your Team Chair for his/her signature. Processing is conditional on your having provided all documents (edited exit statement, PAF, etc.) to the Team Chair. The Team Chair then mails the form to ABET; usually it takes a few weeks for ABET to send you a reimbursement check.

2. Attending AIChE E&A Committee Meetings

These meetings are held twice per year, once in July just before the ABET EAC meeting and once during the annual AIChE meeting. It is the responsibility of each E&A Committee member to pay for their own travel to these meetings. In many cases the organization (company or university) will reimburse your travel if you clear it with appropriate decision-makers ahead of time.

3. Observers

It is true that AIChE used to pay for the cost of Observers to make their

first visit, as part of their training. However, now it is up to your employer to support this travel (ABET does not pay for Observers). Thus this travel will be subject to the rules of your organization.

VII. Roles and Responsibilities of an Engineering Accreditation Committee (EAC) Representative

As noted in Section IV C, the EAC representatives are selected from the E&A committee members. This section describes the responsibilities and activities of an EAC member.

Currently AIChE has four representatives on the Commission. A commissioner normally serves for five years. A commissioner's primary duties are to act as the chair for campus visits, vote on the accreditation recommendations, serve on one of the EAC committees, and help in the training of PEVs.

A. Team Chair

Each EAC commissioner is generally required to serve as a Team Chair for two visits each year, but it may be only one visit if that visit is to a university with many programs which are to be accredited. The commissioner is also asked to review and prepare accreditation reports for universities which have submitted Interim Reports.

Prior to the visit the Team Chair has the following responsibilities:

- Establish the date of the visit with the Dean
- Confirm that the proposed PEVs and observers are available at the time of the visit and that the institution agrees that there is no conflict of interest with the proposed PEVs.
- Meet the institution's representatives at the Summer EAC meeting where a luncheon and an accreditation review are held.
- Prepare a schedule template for the visit into which the PEVs are to fit their individual meetings.
- Arrange for all the logistics associated with the visit – meeting rooms, computer facilities, accommodations, restaurants, etc.
- Facilitate interactions between the PEVs and program chairs to be sure that all relevant information has been obtained and as many issues have been addressed as possible before the visit.

During the visit the Team Chair has the following responsibilities:

- Oversee the team meetings. Moderate to assure consistency and even-handedness in the evaluations.
- Meet with the Dean and members of the institution's administration.
- Review exit statements and PAFs for content, consistency, and format.
- Lead the team in the presentation to the administration.

After the visit the Team Chair has the following responsibilities:

- Consolidate and edit the PEVs statements into one consistent document.
- After receipt of any 14-day response consult with the PEV and prepare a - - Draft Statement to the Institution. This report is considered and revised by two editors and ABET headquarters before it is forwarded to the institution.
- Several months later a Due Process Response is provided by the institution if there were any shortcomings. Taking that into account, and with consultation with the PEVs as necessary, the Team Chair prepares a Final Statement to the Institution and forwards it through the same channels as the Draft Statement.

B. Commissioners

All Commissioners are required to be at the EAC Summer meeting normally held in July. If they are unable to attend they are expected to send the alternate from their respective society, in our case the AIChE. At this meeting all proposed Final Statements with the recommended accreditation actions are acted upon. If no shortcomings have been identified these statements are collected in a Consensus Document and approved as a group. Any commissioner, however, can have an institution removed from this group and have it brought up for discussion. All institutions for which shortcomings have been identified are presented individually by the respective Team Chair to the commission for consideration. At this time the proposed Final Statement and accreditation action can be approved or amended. Whatever the outcome the results are what are provided to the institution and cannot be appealed unless the recommendation is not to accredit.

C. Committees

Each commissioner serves on one of the EAC committees:

- The Communications Committee, which is charged with the developing, promoting and implementing a plan for internal communications within the EAC and ABET and external communications with constituencies.
- The Criteria Committee, which regularly reviews the criteria and proposes revisions to the criteria as needed. Proposed changes may be developed by the committee or received from member societies. From time to time, the committee may be assigned other duties by the Executive Committee.
- The Nominating Committee, which is charged with the recommendation of a slate of officers for the EAC. In addition, the Committee recommends EAC members for the Executive Committee, reviews society nominations and recommends nominees for the commission to the EAC.

- The Quality and Innovation Committee, which is to continually assess the current state of quality improvement efforts within the EAC. This would include an assessment of what improvement tools are in place and the means by which they are being utilized to foster improvement. Committee focus should also include time to consider and make recommendations that would serve to enhance EAC customer service
- The Training and Materials Committee, which has the responsibility for assuring that all training materials utilized by the EAC for its team chair training, and related program evaluator training (by societies) is current, relevant and accessible (e.g., via internet). Current documents that fall under this committee's oversight include the Manual of Evaluation Procedure, the Program Self Study Instructions, and the Accreditation Policy and Procedure Manual. It is intended that this committee have a significant role in the design of the annual Dean's Day training activities and be involved in evaluation and development of training
- The Executive Committee, which is charged with acting for the EAC when the Commission is not in session. In addition, the Executive Committee develops goals, objectives and strategies for the commission and stewards progress on these activities. The EXCOM oversees commission operations and activities, appoints committee members, and coordinates with other commissions.

D. Training

Commissioners are expected to be participants in the training of new PEVs. The training sessions hosted by the AIChE are normally held during the Annual AIChE Meetings in the fall of the year. The training material is provided by the EAC and is generic for all member societies. Thus, an individual can attend any training session provided by any society. The only differences appear in the specific program requirements.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities of the EAC

This section covers the roles and responsibilities of the Engineering Accreditation Commission in carrying out its accreditation activities. As noted earlier, the EAC is responsible for carrying out accreditation visits and developing accreditation recommendations.

A. EAC Structure

The EAC currently has 59 members representing 23 different professional societies and organizations. Commissioners are nominated by their professional societies and must be approved by both the Commission for which they are nominated and the ABET Board of Directors. Commissioners elect officers and members-at-large who serve as an Executive Committee. The officers of the

Commission are the Chair, Chair Elect, Vice Chair, and Past Chair. The Executive Committee acts for the Commission when the Commission is not in session. In addition, the Executive Committee develops accreditation procedures, assigns Team Chairs and Editors, and oversees committee activities.

B. Selection and Role of the Editor

To ensure consistency across programs and institutions, the EAC has a process by which draft statements are edited. There are two cycles of editing: on the draft statement; and on the final statement after the due process response is received from the institution. There are two editors assigned for each institution: Editor 1 who is a member of the Executive Committee, and Editor 2 who is either the Chair or Past Chair. Assignment of editors is done by the Vice Chair. Editor 1 typically is assigned 8 to 12 schools depending upon the number of institutions being evaluated; Editor 2 reviews all programs (to distribute the workload, the Chair usually reviews all general review visits while the Past Chair handles focused visits).

Following receipt of the draft statement from the Team Chair, Editor 1 reviews the statement and makes changes for the following reasons:

- To ensure that deficiencies, weaknesses and concerns are appropriate actions and supportable based on the information provided
- To ensure that there is consistent treatment of programs from that institution
- To ensure that the statement is in a consistent format
- To identify any issues that might need further discussion and follow-up with the Chair and/or Executive Committee

If any substantive questions or issues are identified, Editor 1 will contact and discuss the issue with the Team Chair to try to reach resolution. Program Evaluators may or may not be involved in this loop depending on the nature of the issues being addressed. Once this issue is resolved, Editor 1 sends the revised version to Editor 2.

Editor 2 reviews the revised statement with the additional perspective of consistency across all institutions. Editor 2 will usually recycle with Editor 1. The Team Chair and Program Evaluator may or may not be involved in this loop depending on the nature of the issues being addressed. Following the review by Editor 2, ABET Headquarters sends the draft statement to the institution.

Institutions may or may not decide to submit due process responses. The responses go to the Team Chair and editors. For institutions submitting significant due process responses, the Program Evaluators will usually be involved in determining if the response has addressed the problem. The draft statement is finalized by the Team Chair and goes back through the editing cycle. The review of the final statement is focused on the changes in due process.

C. Recommendations of the EAC

As the draft statement and then final statement move through the editing process, each person (Program Evaluator, Team Chair, Editor 1 and Editor 2) makes a recommendation on an accreditation action (program evaluators only make a recommendation on their specific program). At the July meeting, the Team Chair presents the institution to the full Commission. The Commission has the final statement as well as the form that tracks the recommendations from the time of the visit to the edited final statement. The Commission votes to approve the proposed recommendations. Changes to a proposed action can be made by Commissioners and must be approved by a majority of Commissioners. Following the voting on all programs, the Consistency Committee of the Commissions may bring back to the Commission for reconsideration any action which appears inconsistent with actions taken on other programs with similar issues.

Actions of the Commission are final. There is an appeal process to the Board of Directors for programs receiving a not to accredit action.

Professional societies play a key role in helping to shape final actions. As noted in Section IV-A-4., prior to the Commission meeting, most professional societies, including AIChE, hold caucuses. The purpose of these caucuses is to review program statements and proposed actions for programs in their discipline. Occasionally, AIChE will find a program where we disagree with the proposed action. The AIChE Commissioners then visit with the Team Chair to convince him or her to change the recommendation. If that is not successful, a proposed change will be made at the Commission meeting.

AIChE has a special arrangement with ABET that goes back to the formation of ABET from the Engineers' Council for Professional Development. The role of the AIChE E&A Committee is specifically identified in the ABET Accreditation Policy and Procedures Manual. AIChE retains the right to have a parallel review of the evaluators report and to take an independent accreditation action. AIChE has never invoked this "nuclear" option. In the event of a separate AIChE accreditation action which is different from the EAC, the most severe action would prevail.

Acknowledgement

The following members of the E&A Committee have authored/edited portions of this document:

Ronald P. Danner
Thomas F. Edgar
Roland H. Heck
Larry A. Kaye
Carl E. Locke
Gary Patterson
Edward M. Rosen
Mayis Seapan
Warren D. Seider
Eugene R. Thomas