One-day workshop planned to assist administrators with accreditation process

More than half of the unit administrators of schools seeking accreditation or re-accreditation in the next two years are in the leadership position for the first time. In the past two years, Executive Director Susanne Shaw said, several less-than-satisfactory self-studies were submitted to the ACEJMC office for review and, increasingly, more administrators are assigning the self-study work to administrative assistants or faculty members who have no experience with the accreditation process.

To assist administrators and their assistants with the accreditation process, ACEJMC will have a workshop Thursday, Aug. 23, the day before the Council meeting on Friday, Aug. 24 in Chicago. Administrators can learn how to prepare a good self-study and how to prepare for the site visit. Other presentations will be on how to write an effective strategic plan, diversity plan and assessment plan.

Examples of good self-studies and plans will be available. A detailed presentation will be made on how to make arrangements for the site visits. A session also will be presented on mistakes to avoid.

Anyone is welcome to attend, but it is important for those who have site visits in the next two years to attend. The program also will provide an opportunity for administrators to ask specific questions about the accreditation process.

Information about hotel reservations will be sent in April. Participants are welcome to attend the Council meeting on Friday. The Council will approve the changes in the accrediting standards at this meeting. The changes will go into effect the beginning of the 2013-14 academic year.

If you have questions about the Aug. 23 workshop, contact Shaw at 785 864-3986 or at sshaw@ku.edu.

Standards Review Committee to survey accredited and unaccredited programs

ACEJMC’s 10-year review of standards is under way and as part of this work, the Standards Review Committee will administer a survey to both accredited and unaccredited journalism and mass communications programs in January.

Led by Council Vice President Doug Anderson, the committee has invited comment over the past several months on the nine accrediting standards and the accreditation process in general. The committee held an information gathering session with about 60 in attendance at the August AEJMC conference in St. Louis.

Issues likely to be considered as part of the review include a change in the 80-65 credit rule, ways to strengthen review of professional master’s programs, review of online degree programs, and expectations of diversity and assessment plans.

Comments for the standards review can be submitted to the ACEJMC office at sshaw@ku.edu.
New public member appointed to the Accrediting Council

Accrediting Council president Peter Bhatia has appointed Thomas Armstrong as a public member of the Accrediting Council. His term will begin with the fall 2012 meeting in Chicago.

Armstrong is commissioner and associate director of the Commission for Academic Accreditation, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. In this role, he works with licensure and program accreditation for more than 65 institutions of the UAE.

Armstrong spent 25 years in administrative roles in higher education institutions in the United States, including interim chancellor and vice chancellor for academic and student affairs at LSU Alexandria. He also was president at Tennessee Wesleyan College; provost and senior vice president at Texas Wesleyan University; provost and professor of history at Francis Marion University in Florence, S.C.; and dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Georgia College and State University.

Armstrong received his Ph.D. in 1974 from the University of Virginia.

Dues adjusted for professional and educator organizations

At its Sept. 9 meeting in Chicago, the Accrediting Council approved a $3,000 per seat dues structure for all professional and educator member organizations on the Council.

A strategic planning committee charged with examining membership dues recommended the proposal as a means of changing an outdated dues structure that had created an imbalance in membership representation and fees.

Council President Peter Bhatia, who chaired the committee, said professional organizations had been paying higher dues than educator organizations for several years. Bhatia said the dues had been based on the operating budgets of each professional organization from several years ago. Professional organizations had paid as much as $7,000 per seat annually while educator organizations were paying $1,500 or less per seat.

All seats on the Council are set at $3,000 per representative

In recent years, the Council had lost several long-time professional members, citing the financial burden of the dues during particularly difficult economic times. As a result, Council membership had tipped toward more educator representation, rather than the preferred balance between professionals and educators.

With the approved measure, annual dues for educator organizations currently paying $1,500 per seat will be phased in at $500 increases over the next three years. Increases in dues for ASJMC, which pays $6,000 annually for six seats, and AEJMC, which pays $5,000 for four seats, will be phased in over two years: at $2,000 per seat in 2012-13 and $3,000 per seat in 2013-14. All professional organizations will pay $3,000 per seat beginning 2012-13.

Because the measure requires a change in the bylaws, Council members will receive the revised language for review at least 30 days before the Council meeting April 27-28 in Arlington, Va.
Addressing repeat non-compliances

At its spring and fall meetings, the Accrediting Council discussed how to address a unit’s repeat non-compliances within the same standard. In a memo from Council President Peter Bhatia to site team chairs, the Council provided the following guidance:

When a unit has been out of compliance two previous visits on the same standard, the Council requests that the site team gives that standard a more careful review during the visit. If the unit is then found out of compliance a third time, the site team should give a fully detailed report on that standard and the multiple noncompliances, either within the narrative on that standard and, as needed, in the summary section at the end of the report. Three consecutive failures on the same standard without mitigating circumstances should be an important factor in the site team’s deliberations and teams should consider the range of decisions available to them (reaccreditation, provisional, denial). While the Council avoids “accreditation math,” it finds multiple non-compliances on the same standard as a larger issue than a first-time or episodic non-compliance.”

Member and program updates

Susan King has been named dean of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication, effective Jan. 1. King, who is vice president for external affairs for Carnegie Corporation of New York, also will hold the title of John Thomas Kerr Distinguished Professor at UNC.

Tom Goldstein has been named interim dean at the University of California at Berkeley, Graduate School of Journalism. Goldstein is a professor of journalism and director of the Media Studies Program at Berkeley. He replaces Neil Henry, who stepped down in August to return to teaching.

Raul Reis will become dean of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Florida International University effective Dec. 1. He was chair of the department of journalism and mass communication at California State University, Long Beach.

AEJMC has revised its bylaws to permit ACEJMC representatives to be elected by the full membership. In the past, AEJMC’s representatives to the Council were elected from within the Teaching Standards Committee.

Council approves accreditation affiliation for educator members

The Accrediting Council approved a proposal at its Sept. 9 Council meeting in Chicago requiring all Council members representing educator organizations to be affiliated with accredited schools.

The memberships of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) and the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication (ASJMC) include both accredited and non-accredited schools. This mixed membership is represented in the organizations’ elected representatives to the Accrediting Council.

Peter Bhatia, Accrediting Council president, said the new membership requirement would be grandfathered in, allowing the two current representatives from unaccredited schools to complete their terms.

Because the measure requires a change in the bylaws, Council members will receive the revised language for review at least 30 days before the April 27-28 Council meeting in Arlington, Va.