



The Center for  
College  
Affordability &  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 6:00 AM, WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 20, 2010**

**New Study on Higher Education Accreditation:**

*The Inmates Running the Asylum? An Analysis of Higher Education Accreditation*

Washington, DC –The Center for College Affordability and Productivity, with generous support from Lumina Foundation, is pleased to announce the release of its latest study: *The Inmates Running the Asylum?: An Analysis of Higher Education Accreditation*, on Wednesday, October 20, 2010. This study provides an in-depth analysis of the role that the accreditation process plays in American higher education.

In the report, the authors develop a rubric to examine the overall performance of accreditation over time and to make policy recommendations for reform of the current system. They do so by evaluating the historical functions of accreditation, including quality assurance and quality improvement, as well as the impact of accreditation on the overall health and efficiency of the higher education system. In addition, the authors evaluate common accreditation reform proposals and consider their likely effects.

After an extensive analysis of accreditation, the report concludes that:

“Our current system of higher education accreditation is broken. The system is mired in secrecy, delivers imprecise and largely unhelpful information, is clouded by possible currents of self-interest, restricts entrepreneurial initiative, is often costly to administer when all costs are considered, and is not sufficiently outcomes based. It does a poor job of conveying important information to those funding it...and its relevance as a quality control and enhancement device is at best marginal.” (page 48)

The authors suggest that a new outcomes-based model of accreditation be established that:

- Does a better job of matching students to institutions given their tastes, talents and financial condition;
- Provides vastly more indicators of quality in a far more nuanced fashion;
- Avoids conflicts of interests and serves a public need;
- Certifies outcomes rather than inputs and processes;
- Minimizes the regulatory authority of government in order to preserve the historical strengths of higher education.

An embargoed (until 6:00 AM, October 20, 2010) copy of the report can be can be downloaded at <http://www.centerforcollegeaffordability.org/uploads/Accreditation.pdf>.

*The Center for College Affordability and Productivity is an independent, non-profit higher education research center based in Washington, D.C.*

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