

"Libraries" dropped from accreditation criteria

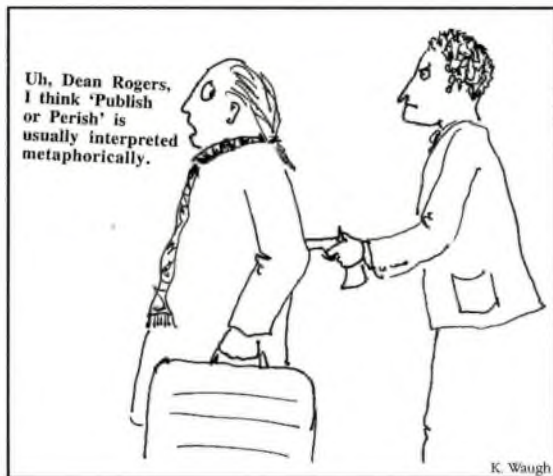
The Commission of Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (ACS) released in September its proposed "Principles and Requirements for Accreditation" for comment. The proposed new accreditation requirements, according to a letter from James T. Rogers, executive director of the Commission on Colleges, to "Chief Executive Officers of the Commission on Colleges Members and Candidate Institutions and Other Interested Parties," are to "replace the current Criteria for Accreditation, and [propose] a new way of conducting institutional peer reviews." The intentions of the proposed criteria are to be less prescriptive and to give institutions greater latitude in achieving their mission.

For example, the current criteria has a five-page section on "Library and Other Learning Resources" with more than 40 "must" statements to which institutions seeking accreditation must adhere. The proposed "Principles" contain one "Core Requirement" and three "Comprehensive Statements" relating to "Learning Resources" with no mention of libraries, librarians, or the need for a graduate education to work in libraries.

The proposed changes may involve smaller reaffirmation teams, and there is some concern that the teams may not have a librarian member as they currently do. SACS has

hosted six regional meetings in its area to provide additional information about the proposed requirements and process and to gather reactions to them. ACRL has arranged with SACS to have librarians at each of those meetings to represent ACRL. In addition, numerous state ACRL Chapters, state library associations, and individual librarians have written to SACS expressing concerns about the proposed changes.

According to a Middle States Association official, all the directors of the regional accreditation agencies met earlier this summer to discuss changes in the accreditation process and several changes are now being considered. For example, the proposed Middle States changes will have fewer references to the library but they will retain commentary on information literacy. A Western Association official reported that librarians are involved in their review and that the association is developing a document that is more inspirational than prescriptive and one with an emphasis on student learning. Librarians are urged to monitor any proposed changes in their accreditation region and to forward comments and concerns both to their regional accreditation agencies and to their institutions' president.—*Larry Hardesty, Austin College, lhardesty@austinc.edu*



Old Dominion mounts digital exhibit

The Old Dominion University (ODU) Libraries, in collaboration with the Department of English, mounted a Web exhibit chronicling the history and character of the ODU Annual Literary Festival, now in its 23rd year. This is the libraries' first full-scale digital exhibit and signals its commitment to creating digital exhibits. Unique brochures capturing the character of each festival are featured at the site and may be viewed at <http://www.lib.odu.edu/litfest>. ■