

ACNM Division of Accreditation Annual Report, 2006

The purpose of the ACNM Division of Accreditation (DOA) is to plan, implement, and evaluate the accreditation process for programs and institutions that offer midwifery education. Its goals include fostering the continuous development and improvement in the quality of midwifery education, and assuring the public and other stakeholders that the highest possible standards of education and professional competence are maintained. The DOA accomplishes these goals through a peer review process.

The Division of Accreditation (DOA) consists of four units:

- **Governing Board** is responsible for the administration of the DOA's activities, formulation of policy, and the development of the criteria used by the BOR in determining accreditation status.
- **Site Visitor Panel** arranges, conducts, and evaluates accreditation visits to midwifery education programs or institutions.
- **Board of Review (BOR)** is responsible for review of an applicant's Preaccreditation Report or Self-Evaluation Report and the Site Visit Report (SVR), and for determination of accreditation status.
- **Advisory Committee**, composed of members representing nursing, medicine, education and the public, as well as the immediate past chair of the DOA, advises in the development of policy and evaluation of the DOA.

This year was marked by several important events and activities.

- A major effort for the DOA this past year has been the petition to the U.S. Dept. of Education for continued recognition as a programmatic accrediting agency and an expansion of scope to include institutional accreditation. On June 6, 2006, the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity voted unanimously to recommend to the U.S. Secretary of Education that our petition be granted, and the official letter from the U.S. Secretary of Education granting the requested recognition was received in December, 2006. The exact language of the recommended scope of recognition is: "The accreditation and pre-accreditation of basic certificate, basic graduate nurse-midwifery, direct entry midwifery and pre-certification nurse-midwifery education programs. The accreditation and pre-accreditation of freestanding institutions of midwifery education that may offer other related health care programs to include nurse-practitioner programs, and including those institutions and programs that offer distance education." The move to expand to institutional accreditation was at the request of the ACNM membership, and required a major time and resource commitment by the DOA. This effort will have been in vain if the midwifery community does not respond by developing the freestanding institutions that the DOA can now accredit. At present, we have accredited one institution (Frontier).
- A timetable has been developed for the Accreditation Criteria revisions, which must be completed by 2008. Broad input will be sought during the revisions. Although suggestions from program directors and the ACNM membership continues to be important, consideration must be given to national issues in accreditation, especially the expectation at the federal level that accrediting agencies should be the enforcers to ensure that schools and programs can document student outcomes.
- The Governing Board is continuing to discuss the impact of the proliferation of DNP programs on midwifery education and accreditation. A number of midwifery

education programs will be DNP programs or have a DNP option. Discussion continues about the development of accreditation criteria for doctoral programs.

- The Governing Board has begun a Strategic Planning process that includes identifying our vision and stating our values, identification of strategic issues for the DOA, and development of goals to solve the problems identified in those issues. Sub-groups have been formed to develop action plans for each goal. The 3 strategic issues are:
 - 1) Financial solvency
 - 2) The decrease in the number of education programs and graduates
 - 3) Development of accreditation criteria and processes that meet current and future needs
- The DOA has been administratively and financially separate from ACNM since 1983. However, the name “Division of Accreditation” has caused confusion among the membership and the public about the nature of the relationship between ACNM and the DOA. In order to clarify the relationship and to have a less-amusing acronym than “DOA,” the Governing Board has voted to change the name to the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME). The name change will take place after the 2007 Annual Meeting.
- During 2006, the Board of Review granted one initial programmatic accreditation and 4 programmatic reaccreditations. Closing reports were received for the programs at the University of Texas at Galveston, Charles Drew University, Boston University, and UT Southwestern Medical School (Parkland). We received a request for a preaccreditation site visit for a proposed new program at the Baylor University School of Nursing, and requests for information from one other school that is planning a new program.
- Mary Brucker has been selected as the next Chair of the DOA (ACME). She will assume the role of Chair-Elect in June of 2007, and assume the full responsibility in June, 2008.

Many thanks are due to the dedicated volunteers and staff who devote their time and expertise to make the Division of Accreditation function effectively.