

ACME

ACCREDITATION COMMISSION
for MIDWIFERY EDUCATION

Strategic

Plan

“Next Level of Excellence”

Period: January 01, 2021 - December 31, 2023

Overview

The Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education is an agency established to advance and promote excellence in midwifery education. The aim of ACME is to ensure that programs are performing at the highest level of quality and providing learning experiences that will lead to optimal outcomes for students. ACME is a reliable authority regarding midwifery education. Since 1982, ACME has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) as a nationally recognized programmatic accrediting agency for nurse-midwifery and midwifery education programs.

Born out of a commitment to ongoing growth and high-quality midwifery education, a strategic planning process was initiated. The goal was to develop a roadmap that will guide all work over the next three years. A necessary step in the process was to perform an environmental scan that included SWOT and PEST analyses. To complete the SWOT and PEST, input was gathered from program directors, volunteers, students, and other stakeholders. An acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the SWOT resulted in valuable information. The PEST analysis was also helpful as it provided an examination of political, economic, social, and technological elements that may or may not impact activities over the next three years.

A wealth of information was collected and used in the planning process. Highlights included:

- There was overlap as to how groups (i.e. volunteers, program directors, students, stakeholders and so forth) perceived ACME.
- There was a recurring theme within each group that ACME's accreditation is valuable to midwifery in that it assures quality preparation.
- Groups were excited to have ACME extend its reach and have a stronger voice for midwifery and students, especially with diversity, equity, inclusion, and preceptors.
- Some believed now is the time for ACME to do more to improve race relations within programs and expand its support of midwifery education, especially as it pertains to preceptors and clinical experiences.
- An almost equal number believed the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for ACME to "think differently."

As a result of the overall findings that were revealed via the SWOT and PEST and extensive discussions, a new vision, mission, core values and goals were created. With these changes and goals, ACME will be positioned to provide gold standard leadership in midwifery education over the next three years.

Vision

ACME envisions a world in which there are no barriers to excellence, diversity, equity, and inclusion in midwifery education.

Mission

The mission of ACME is to establish the standard for high-quality, inclusive midwifery education through criteria assessment, program guidance, and granting of nationally recognized accreditation. ACME accredited programs prepare midwives with the knowledge, professionalism, and abilities to provide competent and compassionate care.

Core Values



Equity

We are committed to building a community that embodies practices and policies that increase access to and advance equity in educational and practice settings.

Integrity

We strive to be fair, honest, and ethical in our actions and decisions.

Transparency

We hold ourselves openly accountable to our consumers and community.

Excellence

We strive to create a culture of growth and uphold our standards of excellence in everything we do.

Collegiality

We believe the success of our work relies on fostering strong relationships, effective collaborations and passionate partnerships in the midwifery, academic and global community.

Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal 1

ACME will work to dismantle structural racism and promote equity in midwifery education by raising awareness and prioritizing humanity.

Objective 1: Increase efforts to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Strategic Tactics

- Establish a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Taskforce that will serve as a catalyst for thought leadership pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Establish a workgroup to develop criteria related to reducing structural and systemic racism.
- Review the ACME Policies and Procedures Manual and modify and/or add (as applicable) policies and procedures that advance the ACME code of conduct with accredited programs.
- Develop a framework and guidelines to ensure diversity data are collected consistently and accurately using tools such as the AMR, SER, and newly developed instruments.

Objective 2: Expand streams of communications to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Strategic Tactics

- Launch a new website and/or enhanced web pages that include resources and value statements that demonstrate ACME's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Require accredited programs to promote their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion via their program's web page.
- Create and disseminate a position paper affirming ACME's beliefs, commitment and the need for diversity, equity, and inclusion in midwifery programs.
- Establish and implement a monthly calendar for social media messaging that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Objective 3: Provide a mechanism that supports and encourages feedback from students, faculty, and staff to identify and alleviate racial prejudice and divisive and culturally insensitive behaviors and practices in midwifery programs.

Strategic Tactics

- Develop and implement a grievance plan with multiple pathways to solicit and receive feedback and complaints.
- Conduct independent annual listening sessions with each target group (i.e., students, faculty, and staff) to continuously evaluate behaviors and practices within programs to alleviate structural racism, microaggressions and systemic inequality.
- Develop avenues to receive and evaluate existing data from ACNM, AMCB and other stakeholder organizations related to complaints and negative experiences that impact midwifery education.
- Work in collaboration with ACNM, AMCB and other stakeholder organizations to channel resources to encourage open feedback from students, faculty, and staff.

Objective 4: Increase diversity on ACME volunteer boards.

Strategic Tactics

- Develop and implement a plan to increase and maintain holistic diversity within ACME’s Board of Commissioners, Site Visitors Panel, Board of Review, and Advisory Committee that reflects characteristics including, but is not limited to, gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical abilities, and age diversity.
- Build upon the current outreach model to fill vacancies and promote the value of diversity.

Strategic Goal 2

To advance growth, excellence, and diversity in the midwifery profession, ACME will work to increase the number of graduates who can meet communities’ unique social, cultural, linguistic, and other needs.

Objective 1: Support the development of midwifery education programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other institutions committed to the education of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

Strategic Tactics

- Identify at least 40 HBCUs and other institutions committed to racial and ethnic minority groups.
- Cultivate relationships at institutions by conducting exploratory meetings to discuss midwifery education.
- Identify innovative and effective programmatic models that can be used to support the development of midwifery education programs at HBCUs and other institutions committed to underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

Objective 2: Disseminate effective practices used to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in midwifery education programs.

Strategic Tactics

- Survey and hold focus groups annually to identify effective practices used to increase student and faculty diversity.
- Develop channels to collect and effectively disseminate results-oriented enrollment strategies.
- Highlight programs that demonstrate and exemplify a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Strategic Goal 3

ACME will continue to refine its operations to ensure it will always be a distinguished and preeminent accrediting authority in midwifery education.

Objective 1: Expand organizational capacity to advance ACME’s mission.

Strategic Tactics

- Ensure full compliance with the U.S. Department of Education criteria for accreditation recognition.

- Develop and implement a business plan that fully examines operations including inputs and outputs.
- Strengthen organizational infrastructure:
 - Obtain IRS Employer Identification Number (EIN)
 - Develop Articles of Incorporation
 - Develop Bylaws

Objective 2: Demonstrate effective financial management.

Strategic Tactics

- Develop a balanced (revenue = expenses) or surplus annual budget.
- Monitor and reduce expenditures to permit effective and efficient operations.
- Implement an internal accounting system.
- Establish and track operational metrics to achieve goals and objectives.
- Explore options to diversify revenue.

Objective 3: Advance excellence in midwifery education by streamlining administrative and accreditation processes.

Strategic Tactics

- Ensure website and/or web pages are user-friendly.
- Conduct a full review and analysis of the current accreditation system, cycles, and schedule; and implement an efficient and effective system.
- Review and re-define as necessary the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.
- Add a student representative to the Board of Commissioners to amplify and address the needs of students.
- Develop sub-committees and taskforces to advance the work and initiatives of the Board of Commissioners (e.g., Ombudsman, review criteria).

Strategic Goal 4

ACME will partner with the midwifery community and other stakeholders to remove barriers, bridge gaps, and strengthen opportunities in midwifery education.

Objective 1: Accelerate the evolution of midwifery education through collaboration.

Strategic Tactics

- Pursue strategic and proactive partnerships to address common challenges and identify areas for innovation (e.g., clinical placements).
- Collaborate with partners/stakeholders: DOME, LACE, AMCB, ACOG, MEAC, ACNM Affiliates, MOCC, C-MAC and others in support of expanding opportunities for traditionally underserved populations.
- Collaborate with partners/stakeholders: DOME, LACE, AMCB, ACOG, MEAC, ACNM Affiliates, MOCC, C-MAC to increase the number of preceptors.
- Connect end-users to resources, scholarships and information provided by partners and other stakeholders by adding links on the ACME web page and via email communications.
- Serve as a resource for related organizations and initiatives.
- Support advocacy efforts of other organizations that align with ACME's mission.

Objective 2: Actively address potential barriers to midwifery education.

Strategic Tactics

- Establish a workgroup to develop a position paper that identifies and communicates barriers and possible solutions.
- Establish a workgroup to develop a position paper/statement related to holistic admissions.
- Establish a workgroup to develop a position paper/statement that analyzes the DNP in midwifery education, and its impacts on the midwifery profession.

Objective 3: Remain informed, adaptable, and responsive to meet the needs of midwifery education programs and students.

Strategic Tactics

- Work with program directors to evaluate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other disruptions at the program level and develop strategies to continue growth in midwifery education.
- Invest in and utilize technology to navigate challenges and provide timely solutions and virtual opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for students to provide third-party comments for programs seeking initial or continuing accreditation.
- Annually monitor the effectiveness of ACME accreditation criteria by analyzing programmatic outcomes data.

Strategic Goal 5

Promote ACME, its work and its support of midwifery faculty, students, and program directors.

Objective 1: Elevate ACME’s commitment and ties to the midwifery community.

Strategic Tactics

- Highlight the Board of Commissioners by adding bios and pictures to the website.
- Rebrand the ACME newsletter and annual report.
- Create and disseminate the ACME accreditation logo.

Objective 2: Broaden ACME brand awareness.

Strategic Tactics

- Develop webinars and workshops to increase knowledge about ACME, midwifery accreditation and ACME processes.
- Develop and disseminate an annual “welcome” message for students.
- Develop videos to promote ACME and accreditation for the website.
- Develop informative videos and infographics for the BOC, BOR and Site Visitor recruitment.

Conclusion

As with most strategic plans, the ACME strategic plan is less about future decisions than it is about the future impact and consequences of today's decisions and practices. The Strategic Plan Team examined the necessities of today and tomorrow with respect to ACME's capacities and resources. The SWOT analysis revealed essential elements. It spoke loudly to the need to review aspects of current functions and responsibilities. In response, essential focus areas were identified. This roadmap, "the strategic plan" positions ACME to evolve and be responsive while working to achieve the next level of excellence.

ACME Board of Commissioners

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