

# California Competes

## Higher Education for a Strong Economy

April 16, 2014

Honorable Das Williams  
California State Assembly, District 37  
Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

### **AB 2247 (Williams)—SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Williams:

We are writing to express our support for AB 2247 (Williams), which would require colleges and universities that receive public funds to post accreditation documents on the institution's website. Making accreditation materials public provides important information to consumers and analysts. Furthermore, it demystifies the accreditation process, helping outsiders to understand what we can and cannot rely on accreditation to accomplish.

States and the federal government rely heavily on accrediting agencies to make judgments about whether colleges and universities have the appropriate expertise, resources, and systems to provide quality educational programs. Institutions gain access to billions of dollars in state and federal funding by virtue of securing and maintaining accreditation. The public's ability to monitor the work of accrediting agencies themselves, however, is virtually nonexistent. This bill is aimed at ensuring a basic level of transparency in the accreditation process by providing public access to the substance of accreditation reviews. The public and policy makers need to know what the accreditation process involves, and the issues that are and aren't pursued.

Many public institutions already make these documents available on their websites. California Competes found that more than 80 percent of the campuses of each of the three public systems – California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California – already make the accreditation materials publicly available (action letters, visiting team reports, and self-studies). Among private institutions, however, almost none are available except the newest reports for those institutions under WASC-Senior accreditation. Because a strong majority of public institutions readily provide these documents on their websites, requiring private and for-profit institutions to also provide this information would help create a more complete picture of accreditation's role in assuring the quality of postsecondary education.

We urge support for AB 2247 to ensure a basic level of transparency in the accreditation process.

Sincerely,

Robert Shireman  
Executive Director  
California Competes

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