

Dear colleagues,

It is difficult today to find any news about higher education that does not include a reference to accreditation. There seem to be accreditation detractors at every turn with varied perspectives on how things need to change. Such scrutiny reinforces our need to be thoughtful and deliberate in the accreditation activities we pursue and the decisions we make.

As we approach the one-year anniversary of Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy's tenure as NWCCU president, I'm excited about the direction and progress that he has already established. We are revising our Standards and Eligibility Requirements, updating policies and procedures, and re-engaging at multiple levels with our regional and national peers in accreditation. In my estimation, we are off to a great new start under Sonny's leadership.

Through the accreditation peer evaluation process, higher learning is enriched by promoting excellence while assuring quality and integrity, all with a primary focus on student achievement. No other system of review replicates the validity and reliability of nongovernmental higher education accreditation. Accreditation works because of thousands of volunteer hours banked by individuals serving as evaluators, committee members, reviewers, and commissioners. Without the generosity and commitment of these volunteers, the accreditation enterprise would quickly grind to a stop.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as chair of the NWCCU Board of Commissioners these past few years. As my term draws to an end, I express my appreciation to everyone whose contributions have encouraged and improved this work. I invite each of us to continue our collaboration in sustaining the unique value that higher education accreditation delivers to our institutions, our communities, and especially our students.

Best regards,

Joe Brimhall, Chair
NWCCU Board of Commissioners