

Accreditation Documents

for Undergraduate Programs in
Family and Consumer Sciences

2019 Edition



American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS)
COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION

**American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences
Council for Accreditation**

**ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTS
FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS IN
FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES
(2019 Edition)**

This 2019 edition of the *Accreditation Documents*, like previous revisions, reflects the continuing evolution of the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences' accreditation program as the Council for Accreditation responds to changes in the profession, higher education, and society. Sincere appreciation is expressed to all those who contributed to the 2019 revision of the *Accreditation Standards*. The *Accreditation Documents* includes the policies and procedures from the 2010 edition and the revised 2019 standards.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. GLOSSARY	
Accreditation.....	9
Accreditation Appeals Committee.....	9
Accredited.....	9
Appeals Hearing Panel.....	9
Assessment.....	9
Assessment Methods or Strategies.....	9
Body of Knowledge.....	9
Capacity Building.....	10
Concept.....	10
Conflict of Interest.....	10
Council for Accreditation (CFA).....	10
Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).....	10
Criteria.....	10
Delayed Action.....	10
Denial of Accreditation.....	10
Director of Accreditation.....	10
Distance Education.....	10
Educational Institution.....	11
Education Outcomes.....	11
Faculty.....	11
Family Systems.....	11
Full-time Faculty.....	11
Full-time Faculty Equivalent.....	11
General Education.....	11
Global Interdependence.....	11
Goals.....	11
Human Systems Theory.....	11
Institutional Response to the Site Visit Report.....	11
Integrative Focus.....	11
Intent.....	12
Interim Reports.....	12
Knowledge Base.....	12
Learning Objectives.....	12
Mission.....	12
Objectives.....	12
Outcomes Assessment.....	12
Programs(s).....	12
Provisional Accreditation.....	12
Research.....	12
Self-Study Report.....	12

Site Visit.....	13
Site Visit Report.....	13
Site Visit Team.....	13
Standards.....	13
Strategy.....	13
Student Learning Outcomes.....	13
Student Faculty Ratio.....	13
Student Outcomes Assessment.....	13
Supporting Disciplines.....	13
Sustainability.....	13
Unit.....	13

II. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION	15
Council for Accreditation (CFA).....	15
Collegiate Assembly (CA).....	15
ACCREDITATION WITHIN FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES	16
Mission of Accreditation.....	16
Purposes of Accreditation.....	16
Family and Consumer Sciences Subject Matter.....	17
Accreditation Eligibility.....	17
INITIATING THE PROCESS	18
Application Process.....	18
Exclusion of a Program or Programs from CFA Review.....	18
Application Approval.....	18
Disengaging from the Accreditation Process.....	18
FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS	19
SELF-STUDY REPORT PREPARATION	19
Collating the Self-Study Report.....	20
Extensions and/or Delays.....	21
CFA RESPONSE TO THE SELF-STUDY REPORT	21
Pre-Review of the Self-Study Report.....	21
Approval of a Site Visit.....	22
Delay or Denial of a Site Visit.....	22
SITE VISITS	22
Overview.....	22
Establishment of Dates of Site Visit.....	22
Time Frame of the Site Visit.....	22
Readily Available Resources and Data.....	23
The Site Visit Agenda.....	23

Site Visit.....	24
SITE TEAM VISITORS	25
Site Visit Team Membership.....	26
Conflict of Interest.....	26
Site Visit Team Compensation.....	26
SITE VISIT REPORT	26
Content of the Site Visit Report.....	27
Site Visit Report Timeline.....	27
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE SITE VISIT REPORT	27
COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION DELIBERATIONS	28
Selection of Post-Review Committee.....	28
Process.....	28
Action Communicated.....	29
Archiving of Materials.....	29
ACCREDITATION DECISION	29
Provisional Accreditation.....	29
Denial of Accreditation.....	30
Revocation of Accreditation.....	30
Suspension of Accreditation.....	30
Withdrawal from Accreditation.....	30
Announcement of Decisions.....	31
Inaccurate Representation.....	31
ACCREDITATION PERIOD	31
INTERIM REPORTS	32
Retention of Interim Reports.....	32
Request for Show Cause.....	32
Review of Show Cause.....	32
Decision.....	33
PROCEDURE TO APPEAL FOR RECONSIDERATION	33
Accreditation Appeals Committee.....	33
Appeals Procedure.....	33
Rights of the Appellant Unit and CFA During a Hearing.....	35
Chair of the Appeals Hearing Panel.....	35
Prior to the Hearing.....	36
CFA Representation.....	36
Institutional Representation.....	36
Closure of Appeal.....	37

COMPLAINTS AND ADVERSE INFORMATION	37
CONFIDENTIALITY	37
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	38
REVIEW AND REVISION OF CFA STANDARDS AND CRITERIA AND ITS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	39
III. COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION RULES OF ORDER	
NAME	41
PURPOSES	41
MEMBERSHIP	42
Nominations and Appointments.....	42
Tenure of Membership.....	42
Reappointment.....	42
Continuation of Service.....	42
Conflict of Interest.....	42
Vacancies.....	43
OFFICERS	43
Officers.....	43
Responsibilities of Officers.....	43
Eligibility.....	44
Elections.....	44
MEETINGS	44
Meetings.....	44
Quorum to Conduct CFA Business.....	44
COMMITTEES	44
Standing Committees of the CFA	45
Executive Committee.....	45
Nominating Committee.....	45
Accreditation Appeals Committee.....	45
Ad Hoc Committees.....	45
PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY	45
AMENDMENTS	45

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I. GLOSSARY

The following definitions are used in the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) *Accreditation Documents*:

ACCREDITATION The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) states that “accreditation is a voluntary, non-governmental, self-regulatory process for recognizing institutions or programs that meet or exceed the level of quality necessary to achieve their stated purposes and thereby meet their responsibilities to their publics. Accreditation, which applies to institutions or programs, is distinguished from certification or licensure, which applies to individuals.”

Accreditation, defined by the AAFCS Council for Accreditation (CFA), is a system for reviewing a family and consumer sciences (FCS) Unit to determine whether it has successfully completed the accreditation process and has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality. Accreditation is conferred with requirements for interim reports (at 3 years, 5 years, and 7 years) and is granted for a maximum of 10 years. The term "accreditation" is used exclusively to refer to accredited programs. If appropriate, the term "provisional" is used to modify “accreditation.”

ACCREDITATION APPEALS COMMITTEE A standing committee appointed by the CFA Chair from which an Appeals Hearing Panel will be constituted when an institution appeals an adverse accreditation decision. (See *Procedure to Appeal for Reconsideration*)

ACCREDITED "Accredited" is the status granted to a family and consumer sciences Unit that has successfully completed the accreditation process and has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality. A program is accredited for 10 years.

APPEALS HEARING PANEL The CFA Chair, in consultation with the Director of Accreditation, appoints an Appeals Hearing Panel from the Accreditation Appeals Committee. The Panel hears the appeal of an institution and statements from a representative of CFA concerning a particular adverse accreditation decision and then makes a recommendation to the CFA. (See *Procedure to Appeal for Reconsideration*)

ASSESSMENT The term “assessment” is used in two ways. First, it refers to the gathering of information to be used for evaluating a program’s ability to accomplish its mission. Second, it is used to determine if students have learned concepts and applications necessary for professional practice. (See *Educational Outcomes, Learning Objectives, Outcomes Assessment, Student Learning Outcomes, and Student Outcomes Assessment*)

ASSESSMENT METHODS OR STRATEGIES The evaluative techniques used to yield the necessary data to document a program’s ability to meet its stated goals and expectations for student learning.

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE The subject matter of family and consumer sciences that forms the basis of accreditation by the CFA. From the perspective of a holistic and synergistic focus, family and consumer sciences professionals relate to the interrelationships among individuals, families, and communities through (a) their study of human systems theory and life course development, (b) capacity building, (c) issues that foster wellness, (d) global interdependence, (e) appropriate use of technology, (f) resource development and sustainability, and (g) public policy development and analysis. An understanding of the complexity of the reciprocal

relationships (interrelationships and interdependence) among individuals, families, communities, and the many environments in which they function throughout their life spans is the unifying focus of the family and consumer sciences knowledge base. An understanding of individual, family, and community needs, ecosystems, and life course development underpins the dynamic, holistic, and integrative nature of family and consumer sciences. A more in-depth discussion of the body of knowledge is found in Standard 2. (See *Knowledge Base*)

CAPACITY BUILDING The practice of individuals, families, and communities acquiring knowledge and skills, building on assets and strengths, respecting diversity, and responding effectively to change. Some of the competencies required for 21st Century living include the ability of human beings to understand and solve complex problems, to preserve the knowledge of indigenous cultures in the context of rapid globalization, to use technology appropriately, and to strive for balance between change and continuity. Institutional capacity depends upon the competencies of individuals and families and their commitment to build sustainable communities.

CONCEPT An abstraction representing the world of objects and events and a means of organizing them.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST “A circumstance in which an individual’s capacity to make an impartial or unbiased accreditation decision may be affected because of prior, current, or anticipated institutional affiliation(s), or other significant relationship(s) or association(s) with the institution under review.”

(Source: *Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Operational Policy A-4, Revised 2005. Webpage last updated 01/20/06*).

COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION (CFA) The official accrediting body of AAFCS.

COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITATION (CHEA) A non-governmental organization that seeks to promote greater public accountability, increase the importance and usefulness of non-governmental accreditation, and improve the practice of accreditation. It works to foster and facilitate the role of accrediting agencies in promoting and assuring the quality and diversity of American post-secondary education. To promote these ends, CHEA recognizes, coordinates, and periodically reviews the work of its member accrediting bodies. It also reviews and grants recognition to other accrediting bodies that seek its approval and meet its standards.

CRITERIA Specific expectations used to judge if the Unit under review has met an accreditation standard.

DELAYED ACTION A response to the pre-review of a self-study of a Unit seeking accreditation when additional information is needed before an on-site visit decision can be made.

DENIAL OF ACCREDITATION Final negative decision on application for accreditation. This decision is rendered by the CFA when a Unit does not meet the criteria for accreditation.

DIRECTOR OF ACCREDITATION The AAFCS professional staff member who works with the CFA. In addition to other duties, the Director facilitates the accrediting process by providing information to Units.

DISTANCE EDUCATION Courses or degree programs offered to students who cannot or choose not to come to campus. Distance education courses/programs can be offered in a

traditional format—where students go to an approved site for classes; in a hybrid format—where students go to a site for part of the course and complete the remaining portion online; or in an online format—where all teaching and learning takes place through the Internet. They can be independent or part of a collaborative effort. Course offerings may be held at a variety of locations, including another campus.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION Universities, colleges, institutes, and post-secondary technical schools and other schools with programs leading to a baccalaureate degree.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES Knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to acquire in their programs. (See *Assessment, Learning Objectives, Outcomes Assessment, Student Learning Outcomes, and Student Outcomes Assessment*)

FACULTY The term "faculty" followed by a singular verb is used to refer to the faculty of the institution as a whole, of the family and consumer sciences Unit, or of some specific segment of the Unit. On the other hand, the terms "faculty members" or "each faculty member" refer to the individual members of the faculty.

FAMILY SYSTEMS Family systems are comprised of the interrelated elements of family members, each with his or her own independence, yet being interdependent upon the other members of the family.

FULL-TIME FACULTY The head count number of faculty members (teaching, research, and outreach) who are employed and defined by the university as full-time faculty.

FULL-TIME FACULTY EQUIVALENT The number of full-time faculty teaching positions budgeted; that is, the number of faculty positions funded by the institution and assigned to the Unit.

GENERAL EDUCATION A series of undergraduate courses in the social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, logic, and communications disciplines that provide a liberal arts foundation to baccalaureate programs.

GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE The impact of people individually and collectively on the world and, in turn, the effect of their actions upon others.

GOALS The relatively permanent qualities toward which the Unit is willing to work, based on its mission and values.

HUMAN SYSTEMS THEORY A theory that seeks to explain human development and behavior in the context of, and in interaction with, various environments.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE SITE VISIT REPORT Through the response by the institution to the written site visit report, administrators have an opportunity to correct any inaccuracies and to provide clarification as needed. This institutional response is not intended to describe any changes that may have occurred within the Unit since the conclusion of the site visit.

INTEGRATIVE FOCUS The unique concepts that address the well-being of individuals, families, consumers, and communities and verify the disciplines within the family and consumer sciences profession.

INTENT Expectations for an academic unit that describe high quality, relevant professional educational preparation.

INTERIM REPORTS Progress reports from each accredited Unit due in the AAFCS Office of Accreditation by September 1 of the 3rd, 5th, and 7th year of accreditation. These progress reports are designed to provide an updated overview of the Unit, including the basic data requested, all major program changes related to any of the Standards, and progress made in addressing CFA recommendations.

KNOWLEDGE BASE The unique concepts that integrate the study of individuals, families, and communities through human systems theory and life course development. Understanding human systems theory is fundamental to addressing basic human needs and linking these concepts to application. This is the core base for all graduates of family and consumer sciences programs. Graduates shall have the ability to apply these concepts to professional practice. (See *Body of Knowledge*)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES Measurable outcomes anticipated from ideas or actions. (See *Assessment, Educational Outcomes, Outcomes Assessment, Student Learning Outcomes, and Student Outcomes Assessment*)

MISSION A brief statement of the fundamental purpose for the Unit. The statement of mission describes the core function and the distinctive focus of the Unit within the institution and to the family and consumer sciences profession.

OBJECTIVES Short-term (1 to 3 years) endeavors that lead toward achieving long-term goals. Objectives generally are measurable.

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT A comprehensive process for evaluating the results of programmatic efforts and student learning. (See *Assessment, Educational Outcomes, Learning Objectives, Student Learning Outcomes, and Student Outcomes Assessment*)

PROGRAM(S) One or more of the Unit's curriculum (curricula) that prepare(s) students for professions in family and consumer sciences. A "program" is the equivalent of a major, and it may include options, concentrations, or other sub-specializations.

PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION The status granted to a Unit for a 2-year period of time if most criteria are met and the Unit shows strong evidence that accreditation can be achieved within that time. The period for which the Unit holds provisional accreditation is included in the Unit's 10-year grant of accreditation.

RESEARCH A systematic scholarly investigation undertaken to reveal established facts or principles.

SELF-STUDY REPORT The official document submitted by a family and consumer sciences Unit as a result of a comprehensive, critical, self-evaluation involving administrators, faculty members, students, and alumni in an analysis of the Unit regarding the Unit's compliance with the CFA accreditation criteria.

SITE VISIT An on-campus visit of approximately 5 days during which representatives of the CFA verify the self-study report and gain additional information from the point of view of qualified and objective observers.

SITE VISIT REPORT An independent analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Unit's program. It includes areas of commendation and those needing improvement, and addresses the Unit's performance with respect to student outcomes. The report is prepared by the site visitors and assists the CFA in determining the accreditation status of the family and consumer sciences Unit. This report verifies the self-study report and the Unit's compliance with standards and criteria.

SITE VISIT TEAM Individuals selected by the Director of Accreditation from a pool of candidates recommended by the CFA. Usually, the team is composed of three visitors but may include two or four visitors if the size and complexity of the Unit warrants.

STANDARDS A set of generally agreed upon measurements to determine the level of excellence, quality, value, and adequacy of an academic program.

STRATEGY A careful plan or method to achieve the identified objective(s) and goal(s).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES Anticipated knowledge, performance, or values students are expected to gain from the educational programs. (See *Assessment, Educational Outcomes, Learning Objectives, Outcomes Assessment, and Student Outcomes Assessment*)

STUDENT FACULTY RATIO The number of students served in relation to the number of teaching faculty. Represented as X:Y—the number on the left side of the “:” indicates the number of students; the number on the right side is the number of teaching faculty. For example, 16:1 refers to 16 students for each teaching faculty member.

STUDENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT The description, measurement, and documentation of what students have learned; assessment takes place at many different levels. (See *Assessment, Educational Outcomes, Learning Objectives, Outcomes Assessment, and Student Learning Outcomes*)

SUPPORTING DISCIPLINES Social, behavioral, biological, and/or physical sciences, as well as the arts and humanities relevant to family and consumer sciences and its specializations.

SUSTAINABILITY The term refers to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; involves consideration of the entire life cycle of people, buildings, the natural environment, and other components in regard to economics, environmental impact, and performance.

UNIT The term used in lieu of college, school, division, department, or other terms. It refers to the institutional entity that prepares students for the family and consumer sciences profession. The Unit must be identified clearly in the institution's catalog(s), bulletins, and other public information documents.

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II. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Accreditation is a voluntary, non-governmental process of institutional or programmatic quality assurance and enhancement in American higher education. It is a self-directed process of the academic and professional education communities to ensure that graduates have had formal preparation that meets nationally accepted standards of quality.

Colleges and universities and their programs are accredited by regional accrediting bodies and by specialized accrediting agencies, respectively. The regional accreditation agencies focus on the educational institution as a total operating unit. Specialized accrediting agencies focus on specific Units within the institutions and examine the quality of educational preparation of students for entry into particular professions or occupations. The specialized accrediting agency for programs in family and consumer sciences is the Council for Accreditation of the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences. The Council for Accreditation strives to avoid duplication of those items reviewed by regional accrediting agencies.

Council for Accreditation (CFA)

The Senate of the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) vested the accreditation activities of the Association in the Council for Accreditation (CFA). The CFA has autonomy to speak and act for AAFCS regarding accreditation policies, procedures, actions, and decisions related to granting, withholding, or withdrawing accreditation. In its organization and in all of its actions and decisions, the CFA is guided and governed by its own published standards and criteria, policies and procedures, and Rules of Order for the orderly conduct of its business. When changes are needed in standards, criteria, policies, procedures, or Rules of Order, these will be circulated widely to key stakeholders for comment prior to adoption.

The CFA is considered a specialized accrediting agency responsible for strengthening post-secondary education in family and consumer sciences by establishing accreditation standards and criteria, and for the evaluation and subsequent granting or withholding of accreditation status to Units seeking this distinction. In the execution of its duties, the CFA operates under two assumptions:

1. Consistent, high quality pre-professional programs benefit the public, students, institutions of higher learning, employers of alumni, and the profession itself.
2. The continuing strength of the family and consumer sciences profession resides in excellent preparation of students for professional and leadership roles.

The CFA is composed of 10 voting members: six representatives from accredited Units elected by the Collegiate Assembly (CA); two practicing professionals; and two representatives of the public, nominated by the CFA and appointed by the AAFCS President. A member of the AAFCS Board of Directors, selected by the AAFCS President, serves as liaison between the CFA and the Board of Directors, participating in all Council meetings without voting privileges.

Collegiate Assembly (CA)

The Collegiate Assembly (CA) includes one official representative of each Unit accredited by the

CFA. The specific function of the CA is to address issues in higher education that may have an impact on accreditation.

ACCREDITATION WITHIN FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

The American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) is an educational and scientific organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as the official accrediting body for family and consumer sciences undergraduate programs in post-secondary institutions in the United States and its territories. The focus of AAFCS accrediting activity is educational programs (majors) leading to a baccalaureate degree or degrees through which professionals are prepared for careers in family and consumer sciences or one of the profession's career specializations.

Mission of Accreditation

The AAFCS Accreditation Program assures the public that accredited undergraduate family and consumer sciences programs provide the highest quality educational experiences and prepare students for professional roles to improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities.

Accreditation standards for university programs and the criteria imbedded within the standards reflect the highest quality expectations defined by the profession. As such, they are based on research, best practices, and qualitative indicators of performance, especially measures of program effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity, including those related to student learning outcomes. As the profession evolves, standards for assessing quality may be redefined periodically.

Standards shall be clear, valid for the profession, and reliably assessed by qualified peers. The process for accreditation shall be rigorous, useful, non-burdensome, and technologically sensitive.

Standards and criteria for accreditation by AAFCS are applicable to all post-secondary family and consumer sciences programs, regardless of program differences such as size, scope, specialization, delivery methods, or public, private, or consortium affiliation.

Purposes of Accreditation

AAFCS accreditation has three basic purposes:

- 1. To Advance Academic Quality.** Standards have been designed to advance academic quality in bachelor's degree programs in higher education. Standards emphasize student achievement and high expectations of teaching and learning, research, service, and outreach. Standards have been developed within the framework of the family and consumer sciences mission and philosophy.
- 2. To Demonstrate Accountability.** Units seeking accreditation have accountability standards that are consistent, clear, and communicated to the public and the greater higher education community. Results of educational outcomes are readily available and used in planning for change and enhancing the program.
- 3. To Encourage, Where Appropriate, Planning and Implementation for Needed**

Improvement. Accredited Units are encouraged to plan, where needed, for change and for improving the learning environment. Units anticipate and address change in a timely and methodical manner. Student achievement is stressed.

Family and Consumer Sciences Subject Matter

The body of knowledge of family and consumer sciences is the subject matter that forms the basis of accreditation by the CFA. From the perspective of a holistic and synergistic focus, family and consumer sciences professionals relate to the interrelationships among individuals, families, and communities through (a) their study of human systems theory and life course development, (b) capacity building, (c) issues that foster wellness, (d) global interdependence, (e) appropriate use of technology, (f) resource development and sustainability, and (g) public policy development and analysis. An understanding of the complexity of the reciprocal relationships (interrelationships and interdependence) among individuals, families, communities, and the many environments in which they function throughout their life spans is the unifying focus of the family and consumer sciences knowledge base. An understanding of individual, family, and community needs, ecosystems, and life course development underpins the dynamic, holistic, and integrative nature of family and consumer sciences. A more in-depth discussion of the body of knowledge is found in Standard 2.

Accreditation Eligibility

The CFA accredits "family and consumer sciences Units." The institution defines the Unit to be reviewed for accreditation. All family and consumer sciences Units, without regard for the title of the Unit offering the program, are encouraged to apply for accreditation. The family and consumer sciences subject matter does not have to reside in one department, or college; it may be in several departments/colleges across the campus. All students in the Unit do not have to take a core or core courses; body of knowledge content is distributed throughout the various curricula. One administrator assumes the role of Unit Chair; that individual brings all elements of the subject matter together for discussions related to all aspects of the accredited Unit.

To be eligible for accreditation, an institution must first be accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting agency. Additionally, programs must have graduated students in educational programs preparing professionals for careers in family and consumer sciences or in one of its specializations.

An institution seeking accreditation of the family and consumer sciences Unit by the CFA is expected to agree to have the Unit analyzed and assessed against standards and criteria, in accordance with the CFA policies and procedures. The institution is expected to agree that any disputed decision will be addressed first using the Council's Procedure to Appeal for Reconsideration. If the matter is not resolved by this Procedure, the institution agrees to submit the matter to arbitration prior to seeking redress in the United States court system. In the event of a conflict between accreditation standards and laws governing the institution, the CFA and Unit will collaborate to determine measures that, over time, allow the program to acceptably meet standards within prevailing laws and without penalty in the accreditation decision.

Accreditation ensures that the Unit—regardless of where it is housed administratively—addresses the integrative, synergistic nature of the profession and that the educational programs meet the established national standards. Units accredited by the CFA have faculty, curricula, resources, and environments commensurate with their stated mission and goals and they meet profession-wide criteria that stress applying the expertise and skills of the field in socially responsible ways.

INITIATING THE PROCESS

Application Process

Regardless of the accreditation status of the Unit, the accreditation process begins by submitting one copy of the institution's undergraduate catalog or appropriate website URL and three copies of Form 5: *Application for Accreditation*. This written application includes the signature of the chief executive officer of the university, or designee of the institution in which the Unit is located, inviting CFA to initiate the accreditation process. The request should be cosigned by the college or school dean, and by the Unit administrator. A nonrefundable application fee is submitted with Form 5: *Application for Accreditation* at least 6 months prior to submission of the self-study report. At the time of submission of the *Application*, contact the Director of Accreditation for the current fee schedule.

Exclusion of a Program or Programs from CFA Review

The CFA accredits Units composed of educational programs through which pre-professionals are prepared for career specializations within family and consumer sciences. Therefore, the CFA expects that all educational programs associated with the profession's body of knowledge, identified in Standard 2, will be reviewed, regardless of any other disciplinary or specialization accreditation. Furthermore, the CFA expects that educational programs not associated with the profession's body of knowledge will be excluded from review. It is the responsibility of a Unit to identify which program(s) is (are) to be excluded from review. The request for program exclusion and the rationale for the request are to be submitted to the CFA as a part of Form 5: *Application for Accreditation*.

The CFA retains final authority for deciding which programs within Units are to be considered for accreditation by the CFA.

Application Approval

The Application for Accreditation will be reviewed by the Director of Accreditation and/or the Chair of the CFA to determine that the Unit meets the initial requirements to be considered for accreditation. If there is doubt among the reviewers concerning the readiness of the Unit to pursue accreditation, the Director of Accreditation or the Chair of the CFA may request review of the Application by the CFA Executive Committee. The Director of Accreditation will notify the administrator of the Unit of the action taken on the Application.

Disengaging from the Application Process

Once the Application for Accreditation is approved, a Unit has 2 years from the date of approval to submit its self-study report to the Council. If the self-study report is not submitted within this time frame, the Application expires and the application fee is forfeited. A new Form 5: *Application for Accreditation* must be submitted in order to proceed.

An institution may withdraw its Application for Accreditation at any time prior to the CFA decision granting a site visit. After a site visit has been conducted and before the accreditation decision has been made by CFA, an institution may withdraw from the accreditation process.

Requests to withdraw an Application for Accreditation are made in writing, signed by the chief

executive officer of the institution, and addressed to the Director of Accreditation at AAFCS. The application fee is forfeited.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The CFA operates on a fee model that includes an application fee, a site visit review fee, and an annual maintenance fee. If an Appeal for Reconsideration of the CFA decision regarding accreditation is made, additional fees are required. Current fee information can be obtained by contacting the Director of Accreditation. The financial obligations are as follows:

1. A Unit seeking accreditation by the CFA will pay a nonrefundable application fee, prior to the review of the Unit's *Application for Accreditation*.
2. A site visit fee is due subsequent to receipt of the site visit approval letter. The amount of this fee is dependent on Unit size and number of required site visit reviewers. The site visit fee is used to offset costs of the site visit and related procedures.
3. Site visitors are compensated for their direct expenses associated with the site visit. The Unit is responsible for all of the expenses of the site visitors' lodging, meals, and transportation on-site. The Unit's financial responsibility for site visitors begins when the site visitors initially arrive at inbound public transportation terminal or at the site itself if public transportation is not used. Site visitors do not receive an honorarium or other compensation for their time and are not allowed to accept gifts of significant monetary value from the Unit.
4. An annual maintenance fee is based on Unit size or the number of undergraduate degrees conferred annually. This fee includes membership in the Assembly of Higher Education and in the Collegiate Assembly.
5. If an Appeal for Reconsideration is made, costs and expenses incurred by AAFCS in providing for the Appeals Hearing Panel, the expenses incurred by the Panel members, the expenses incurred conducting the hearing, and all other expenses in support of the completion of the appeals procedure shall be borne by the appellant Unit. An initial deposit, established by AAFCS, to defray costs shall be provided by the appellant Unit at the time of the appeal. If the expenses incurred exceed the initial deposit, the appellant Unit will be assessed the additional amount. If expenses are less than the initial deposit, the difference will be refunded to the appellant Unit.

SELF-STUDY REPORT PREPARATION

Engaging in self-study usually requires 1 academic year to complete. The Unit's self-study report is the single most important document in helping the CFA ascertain whether the Unit is ready for a site visit. The expectation is that there will be a succinct, thorough, and critical analysis of the family and consumer sciences Unit documented in the self-study report. To be of most value to the program, preparation of the self-study report should involve faculty members, students, alumni, and other stakeholders. The process of self-analysis should result in the preparation of a self-study report that addresses all standards for accreditation. An assessment requires an analytical discussion that provides an insightful analysis of the

strengths and weaknesses of the Unit. Each standard identifies evidence through which the Unit shows the extent to which the standard is met. Each Unit should provide evidence that describes its performance and an assessment that supports a conclusion about how the Unit meets the particular standard. Simply stating that a standard is met is insufficient.

It is the responsibility of the Unit to provide sufficient information to the CFA to enable it to make informed decisions regarding the accreditation process. Each intent and criterion within each standard must be addressed and the required documentation provided. When the information provided is insufficient or unclear, the Council for Accreditation may request additional information. This may delay the process for a site visit.

Templates and matrices have been designed to present data effectively and efficiently in order to document the Unit's adherence to standards. Although the templates may need to be modified to fit the unique characteristics of a Unit, CFA requires that institutions include them in the self-study report. Information included in the matrices should not be duplicated in the narrative or the appendices.

Follow the guidelines under Required Documentation for each Standard and use the templates to format the self-study report. Use Form 7: *Checklist of Steps in the Accreditation Process* to make certain all steps are followed.

Collating the Self-Study Report

1. The self-study report shall include a title page that presents:
 - a. date on which the self-study report was submitted to the CFA;
 - b. name of the family and consumer sciences Unit requesting accreditation;
 - c. name and address of the institution seeking accreditation;
 - d. name of the regional accrediting agency of the institution and the date on which the most recent accreditation was granted;
 - e. identification of the programs that define the family and consumer sciences Unit seeking accreditation and all programs to be included in the review;
 - f. name, title, position, and the address of the chief executive officer of the institution;
 - g. name, title, position, and the address of the administrator to whom the administrator of the family and consumer sciences Unit reports;
 - h. name, title, official position, and address of the administrator of the family and consumer sciences Unit; and
 - i. name, title, official position, and address of the person(s) who prepared the self-study report.
2. The self-study report shall include a copy of the Unit's Form 5: *Application for Accreditation* immediately following the cover page.

3. The self-study report shall include a table of contents that encompasses a list of appendices appropriately titled.
4. The self-study report shall be printed using both sides of 8-1/2 X 11 white paper.
5. Unless the Unit is exceptionally large, CFA expects Units to address the standards, including matrices and forms, within 300 pages printed back-to-back.
6. The self-study report shall be bound into volumes of no more than 150 pages each. Self-study reports will not be accepted in loose-leaf, ring binders.
7. The Unit shall submit five hard copies of the self-study report including appendices. Additionally, programs may submit a PDF version of the self-study report including appendices. The Unit shall submit five hard copies of the institution's undergraduate catalog if available or an electronic copy of the catalog on CD or a USB drive.
8. All items should be sent to the Director of Accreditation at AAFCS. Materials received by September 1 will be reviewed by the CFA during the fall meeting; materials received by February 1 will be reviewed during the spring meeting.
9. In conjunction with the submission of the self-study report, the chief executive officer of the institution must confirm in writing to the Director of Accreditation that the institution and Unit are prepared for an accreditation site visit.
10. Subsequent to CFA review of the self-study report and receipt of the letter indicating approval of a site visit, the Unit shall submit the accreditation site visit fee to the Office of Accreditation at AAFCS.

Extensions and/or Delays

Written requests for extensions and/or delays in submission of the self-study report are submitted to the Director of Accreditation by the Unit administrator at least 6 months prior to the self-study report submission date.

CFA recognizes that many factors may lead to such a request. The request for the extension and/or delay in submission of the self-study report is granted by the Director of Accreditation if the reason is clearly compelling. If the request is unclear or problematic, the Director of Accreditation will forward the Unit's petition to the CFA for consideration. A report of all extensions or delays granted—including the reasons—will be made by the Director of Accreditation at each CFA meeting.

CFA RESPONSE TO THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

Pre-Review of the Self-Study Report

A committee of CFA members is assigned to complete a pre-review of the self-study report submitted by the Unit seeking accreditation. The purposes of the review are (a) to determine whether the self-study report is sufficiently descriptive and analytical to proceed with scheduling of a site visit and (b) to offer guidance to the site visit team.

The committee members assess the self-study report, supporting resources, and all documentation submitted by the Unit. The committee presents its findings and recommendations to the entire CFA. The CFA decides whether to approve, delay, or deny a site visit.

Approval of a Site Visit

If a site visit is approved, the pre-review committee report is given to the site visit team. The report includes strengths and weaknesses of the self-study report as well as questions for the site visit team to clarify. Areas to investigate during the site visit are identified. The CFA may request that additional information be submitted prior to the site visit and/or be made available to the site visit team. The suggestions for further study and the requests for additional information requested prior to and at the time of the site visit are given to the team leader by the Director of Accreditation in advance of the site visit.

If the CFA approves a site visit, the Director of Accreditation sends a letter to the chief executive officer of the institution, the college or school dean, and the Unit administrator stating that the CFA has authorized a site visit.

Delay or Denial of a Site Visit

If the CFA delays or denies a site visit, a letter is sent to the chief executive officer of the institution, the college or school dean, and the Unit administrator providing an explanation of relevant standards and criteria citations substantiating the action and suggesting the next steps to be taken should the Unit wish to continue pursuing accreditation. The Council's decision to deny a site visit is subject to appeal using the *Procedure to Appeal for Reconsideration*.

SITE VISITS

Overview

The site visit is designed to verify information in the self-study report and gain additional information from the point of view of qualified and objective observers. A site visit team of peer reviewers is an important component of the accreditation process. The site team's assessment of the validity of the self-study report provides a key basis for the CFA's decision concerning accreditation.

Establishment of Dates of Site Visit

The Unit administrator and the Director of Accreditation establish dates for the site visit, selecting a time when the chief executive officer of the institution or the appointed designee and other key administrators will be available for the initial and exit interviews. CFA site visits may coincide with site visits from other accrediting agencies. Site visit dates are finalized a minimum of 4 weeks in advance.

Time Frame of the Site Visit

Typically, the site visit is scheduled for 5 days at the institution. The site visit team arrives on Saturday afternoon/evening or early Sunday morning. Prior to beginning the formal site visit, the team meets in executive session to:

1. determine a time and work schedule;
2. review the accreditation resources including the self-study report; and
3. consider other details.

The team spends approximately a half day in conference with the Unit administrator and in becoming familiar with the faculty, the facilities of the Unit, and samples of students' work; 2 days in conference with institution administrators, alumni, faculty, students, and others involved with the Unit; 1 day drafting the report, and less than a half day reporting. Variance with the 5-day schedule requires consultation with the site team leader, the Director of Accreditation, and the Unit administrator.

Readily Available Resources and Data

Prior to the arrival of the site visit team, the Unit administrator and others prepare the following items for review by the team during their visit:

1. copies of course syllabi for all of the Unit's classes;
2. descriptions/examples of outcome assessment strategies;
3. copies and/or examples of quizzes, mid-term and final examinations, term papers and projects, and special study assignments that contain content related to the knowledge base of family and consumer sciences;
4. evidence of undergraduate student research experiences;
5. evidence of undergraduate student outreach experiences;
6. access to minutes of Unit faculty meetings during the 12 months prior to the site visit;
7. access to current statistics such as enrollment data, faculty assignments, and class size;
8. access to comparability of Unit's resources with other programs in the institution with similar or related missions that happen to be organized within different departments, colleges, schools, or institutes; and
9. vitae of all faculty members, full- and part-time: instruction, research, and outreach.

The Site Visit Agenda

Prior to the site visit, the Unit administrator and the site visit team leader, in consultation with the Director of Accreditation, establish the site visit agenda to include the following activities:

- 1.. an overview conference with the Unit administrator and the site visit team;
2. an interview with the chief executive officer of the institution;
3. an interview with the chief academic officer of the institution;

4. an interview with the administrator to whom the Unit administrator reports;
5. interviews with faculty members and other administrators within the Unit;
6. interviews with the Unit's students and alumni;
7. interviews with supervisors of students engaged in providing external experiences such as practica or internships;
8. interviews with selected faculty members and/or administrators of supporting disciplines;
9. interviews with staff from institutional support services such as information technology, admissions, placement, advisors/counselors, and librarians;
10. tour of all Unit facilities;
11. time to review any reports, minutes, records, and materials that update and substantiate the Unit's self-study report;
12. an exit interview with the chief executive officer of the institution and/or designee; and
13. an exit interview with the Unit administrator and whomever is invited to join the interview such as a dean, faculty members, or department chairs.

Site Visit

The site visit begins with an overview conference with the Unit administrator and site visit team.

The purpose of this conference is five-fold:

1. orient both the team members and the administrator;
2. review final details of the site visit, including the time schedule;
3. discuss operating finances and selected topics agreed upon by the Unit administrator and the site visit team leader;
4. review samples of students' work; and
5. familiarize the site team with the location on campus where site visit team members have access to evidence supporting standards.

During this conference, the Unit administrator recommends the protocol to be followed during conferences with the chief executive officer of the institution and/or the appointed representative.

The Unit administrator does not remain with the site visit team during conferences with administrators, alumni, faculty members, students, and others on the schedule. Site visit team members are free to discuss the Unit's programs, personnel, resources, and other related topics with administrators, faculty members, and other institutional representatives during the site visit.

Site visit team members regard all information and data obtained during the site visit as confidential. All reports and accreditation actions of the CFA are regarded as confidential and privileged information. Disclosure of personal or team views at any time before, during, and after the site visit and CFA review is not authorized. Subsequent to the site visit and approval of the formal report, team members are required to return to the Office of Accreditation all copies of the Unit's self-study report along with all other documents pertaining to the site visit.

At the conclusion of the site visit, two summary conferences are held. One conference is held with the chief executive officer of the institution or the appointed designee. The second summary conference is held with the Unit administrator and any department chair(s), program director(s), faculty members, and others the administrator wishes to be in attendance. In both of these conferences, the team leader presents a verbal summary of findings, specifying strengths and recommendations for compliance with standards and criteria.

SITE TEAM VISITORS

Site team visitors will be selected from educators, academic administrators, and practicing professionals. The CFA maintains a roster of potential site visit team members. Through professional development training and experiences, site visit team members are expected to be familiar with the AAFCS accreditation process, standards, criteria, and policies and procedures of the site visit process.

All individuals, including practicing professionals, who are selected as site visitors will:

1. be current members of AAFCS;
2. have a comprehensive overview of the professional field of practice or extensive experience in the supervision of professionals in family and consumer sciences;
3. have an integrative, holistic understanding of the body of knowledge;
4. be able to provide impartial, objective, and sensitive analysis;
5. possess good writing, editing, and small group management skills;
6. be free of conflict of interest; and
7. participate in professional development activities for site visitors.

In addition, faculty members and academic administrators who serve as site visitors are expected to:

1. have at least a master's degree in family and consumer sciences or in one of its specializations;
2. be a current or former faculty member in an AAFCS accredited Unit or be a former member of the CFA; and
3. be tenured or hold or have held the rank of associate professor or higher.

Site Visit Team Membership

The site visit team usually consists of three members. Occasionally, a site visit team may consist of as many as four members or as few as two. The size of the site visit team is dependent on the size, complexity, and the organizational structure of the Unit. One present or former Unit administrator must be on the team. No more than one inexperienced site visitor may be on a team. Site visit team members shall have expertise in the Unit's areas of specialization and experience with Units of a similar size, complexity, and structure. If the Unit prefers to have more site visit team members than designated by the CFA, the institution will be responsible for reimbursing AAFCS for all expenses incurred by additional site visit team members.

The Director of Accreditation will furnish the Unit administrator with a list of potential site visit team members. The Unit administrator may exclude, without cause, no more than two individuals from the list provided. The appointment of the site visit team and the site team leader is the responsibility of the Director of Accreditation and the CFA Chair. The site visit team leader provides leadership in collaboration with the onsite coordinator. A list of the final site visit team members, including each team member's name, address, and vitae, is sent to the Unit administrator at the earliest date possible.

Site visit team members regard all information and data obtained during the site visit as confidential. All reports and accreditation actions of the CFA are regarded as confidential and privileged information. Disclosure of personal or team views at any time before, during, and after the site visit and the CFA review is not authorized. Subsequent to the site visit and completion of the formal report, site team members are required to return to the Office of Accreditation all copies of the Unit's self-study report along with all other documents pertaining to the site visit.

Conflict of Interest

Each team member must be free of conflict of interest regarding the Unit to be reviewed. If an institution suspects that a member of a site visit team was prejudicial by conflict of interest, the chief executive officer of the institution shall describe the circumstances in writing, addressing the CFA through the Director of Accreditation. After receiving notice of suspicion or appearance of prejudice by conflict of interest, the CFA Chair shall appoint a committee of three persons from among the CFA membership to investigate the situation. The committee will issue a report to the CFA. If the CFA supports the institution's contention of prejudice by a site visitor by conflict of interest, the institution shall be afforded a second site visit without payment of a second site visit fee.

Site Visit Team Compensation

Site visitors are compensated for their direct expenses associated with the site visit. Site visitors do not receive an honorarium or other compensation for their services and may not accept gifts of any significant monetary value from the Unit.

SITE VISIT REPORT

Site visit teams are expected to prepare a written report indicating whether a Unit complies with each of the established standards. A site visit report represents an independent analysis of the

strengths and weaknesses of the Unit's program, includes areas of commendation and those needing improvement, and addresses the Unit's performance with respect to student outcomes.

The site visit report consists of two parts. Part A is a summary of the visit written for transmittal to the institution and includes pertinent facts, observations, and impressions. Part B is confidential and consists of specific recommendations of action to the CFA. These recommendations are advisory to the CFA; they are not binding on the CFA.

The site visit report, the self-study report, and the institutional response to the site visit report provide the primary information the CFA uses to determine its accreditation decision.

Content of the Site Visit Report

While on-site, the site visit team completes a site visit report to be presented to the CFA. The site visit report:

1. confirms or denies the information presented in the Unit's *Application for Accreditation* and self-study report;
2. presents an objective analysis of the strengths, areas of concern, and recommendations for improvement for the family and consumer sciences Unit under review;
3. cites unique and promising practices or policies;
4. makes constructive recommendations related to each of the standards;
5. imparts pertinent additional information gathered by the site visit team; and
6. provides an overall assessment of the Unit to the CFA.

Site Visit Report Timeline

Within 60 days following a site visit, the Director of Accreditation transmits the site visit report to the chief executive officer of the institution, the college or school dean, and the Unit administrator.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE SITE VISIT REPORT

The Director of Accreditation sends the site visit report to the chief executive officer of the institution, the Unit administrator, and the school or college dean. Through the institution's response to the site visit report, these administrators have an opportunity to correct inaccuracies in the site visit report and provide alternative interpretations of data. The institutional response should not identify changes in the Unit following the site visit and should not include any new information or data.

The institutional response to the site visit report is sent to the Director of Accreditation no later than 60 days after the Unit receives the written site visit report. The Unit response should be received in the Office of Accreditation by February 1 for consideration at the spring CFA meeting, and by September 1 for consideration at the fall CFA meeting.

The site visit report, the self-study report, and the institutional response to the site visit report provide the primary information the CFA uses to determine its accreditation decision.

COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION DELIBERATIONS

Selection of Post-Review Committee

Members of the post-review team are selected by the Director of Accreditation in consultation with the Chair of the CFA. Extreme care is exercised to avoid conflict of interest. Should a person from the institution being reviewed be a member of the CFA, the individual is excused during all discussions involving the institution.

Process

In the post-visit review of the Unit, consideration of the Unit is placed on the CFA agenda on three different occasions during official confidential sessions of the CFA. It is important to recognize that careful deliberations occur over time.

CFA may select one of three possible accreditation actions based on the extensive review of a Unit's application, the self-study report, the site visit report, the institutional response, and other relevant information: accredit, accredit provisionally, and deny accreditation.

The deliberation continues as follows:

1. A post-review committee composed of CFA members is assigned to each Unit under consideration. This committee reviews the Unit's application, the self-study report, the site visit report, the institution's response to the site visit report, and other relevant information. The site visit Chair may be consulted via telephone conference for clarification only.
2. During the first of three confidential sessions, the review committee meets in conference to discuss findings and to agree on recommendations to be made to the CFA as a whole. The review committee communicates two pieces of information to the CFA: (a) major findings identified in the site visit team report and (b) the site visit team's recommendation regarding accreditation action. In granting or denying accreditation, the CFA is not bound by the recommendations of the site visit team.
3. During a second confidential meeting of the same CFA group, a final report, based on discussion by the total membership of the CFA, is presented and a draft letter is shared. The CFA as a whole discusses the recommendations and modifies, if necessary, the draft of the letter.
4. During a third confidential session, the recommendations for the accreditation action are discussed again and voted upon. A draft of the letter to the institution is reviewed and approved by the CFA.

All recommendations included in a letter to the Unit must be criterion referenced.

When conducting the post-visit review, the CFA is not bound by the recommendations of the site visit team.

Action Communicated

The letter regarding the final decision approved by the CFA during the third confidential session is sent to the chief executive officer, the college or school dean, and the Unit administrator. All recommendations to the Unit must be criterion referenced and included in this letter. If a Unit is granted accreditation, the letter will state when accreditation expires and when the interim reports (at 3, 5, and 7 years) are due.

Results of an accreditation decision of the CFA may be revealed immediately to any representative of the institution involved who is a member of the CFA and who would have been excused during the deliberations of the CFA concerning that institution.

Archiving of Materials

One copy of all materials including Form 5: *Application for Accreditation*, self-study report, catalog (if hard copy is available), pre-review report, site visit report, institutional response to the site visit report, post-review report, the letter indicating the accreditation decision, any other documentation, and all correspondence is retained on file at AAFCS headquarters for the duration of the Unit's accreditation. It is recommended that the Unit retain these materials as well.

ACCREDITATION DECISION

Accreditation is granted to a family and consumer sciences Unit that has successfully completed the accreditation process and has been found to meet or exceed stated standards and criteria of educational quality. A program is accredited for a period of 10 years.

There are several decisions that apply to accreditation.

Provisional Accreditation

Provisional accreditation is granted for a 2-year period to a Unit that meets most of the standards and criteria for accreditation and shows evidence that all standards and criteria can be met within this period of time. The CFA informs the Unit which standards and criteria have not been met.

The CFA may request that the Unit submit a progress report that addresses selected areas of concern rather than all recommendations made by the CFA. By September 1 or February 1 prior to the completion of the 2-year provisional accreditation period, the Unit will submit a progress report documenting that all standards and criteria have been met, specifying actions taken, and stating the rationale for each action taken to bring the Unit into compliance with the standards and criteria. The Unit is to submit to the AAFCS Office of Accreditation five hard copies of the progress report with appendices along with five hard copies and one PDF copy of the institution's undergraduate catalog on a CD or the appropriate website URL to the catalog.

The period of provisional accreditation will be included within the Unit's 10-year cycle of accreditation. The CFA decision to grant provisional accreditation to a Unit is not a final decision; therefore, this decision may not be appealed. Anytime during the 2-year period, a Unit may submit a progress report and a request for a change of status from provisional to accredited.

Denial of Accreditation

The decision to deny accreditation is made by the CFA when a Unit fails to comply with relevant standards and criteria. If this decision is made, the Director of Accreditation will notify the chief executive officer of the institution, the college or school dean, and the Unit administrator. The written notice will include the relevant standards and criteria that were the basis of the decision.

The CFA's decision to deny accreditation of a Unit is a final adverse decision. It may be appealed using the Procedure to Appeal for Reconsideration.

Revocation of Accreditation

Grounds for revocation of accreditation from any Unit accredited by the CFA include:

1. noncompliance with the standards and criteria;
2. failure to submit appropriate materials such as reports in years 3, 5, and 7, a self-study report, progress report, or a response to a show cause action request by the deadlines set by the CFA; and
3. failure to pay financial obligations related to accreditation.

A Unit is entitled to appeal the revocation decision in accordance with the Procedure to Appeal for Reconsideration.

Suspension of Accreditation

Units will be suspended from accreditation for a period of 6 months if:

- (a) self-study reports are not submitted by the designated February 1 or September 1 deadlines, unless the Unit has submitted notification of its intention to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation following the current accreditation period; or
- (b) 3-, 5-, or 7-year interim reports of Units are not submitted by the February 1 deadline; or
- (c) accreditation fees have not been paid without submitting an acceptable justification.

Units that have been granted an extension of the due date for submission of materials to the CFA will not have their accreditation suspended.

If a Unit's accreditation is suspended and the conditions that led to the suspension are not corrected before the next CFA meeting, the Unit's accreditation will be revoked. Any publications developed and published by or for a Unit under suspension of accreditation may not describe the Unit as being accredited.

Withdrawal from Accreditation

An accredited Unit may voluntarily withdraw from accreditation at any time. To withdraw voluntarily from accreditation, the chief executive officer of the institution submits a letter to the Director of Accreditation stating the institution's decision to withdraw from accreditation. No reason needs to be given for the decision and the action. The CFA will include the name of any

institution that voluntarily withdraws from accreditation in the publication of its actions.

Announcement of Decisions

Accreditation decisions are of significance to many stakeholders including universities and colleges, their boards and advisory committees, secondary school personnel, students and their parents, government and private agencies, employers of graduates, and the greater public. Recognizing the importance of accreditation decisions to interested parties and in keeping with the stated policies of CHEA, the CFA accepts its responsibility to make its accreditation decisions widely available.

Following a meeting of the CFA, the Director of Accreditation and the CFA Chair convey, in writing, the decisions of the CFA to the chief executive officer of the institution, the college or school dean, and the Unit administrator. The letter to each Unit includes any criterion-referenced recommendations and commendations the CFA wishes to make to the Unit, states when interim (at 3, 5, and 7 years) reports are due, and when the accreditation period ends. As soon as possible after decisions are made, all actions of the CFA are published in AAFCS publications distributed to AAFCS members including members of the Assembly of Higher Education. A summary is shared at least annually with the AHE and the Collegiate Assembly either as part of an annual meeting or electronically. This listing is available on the AAFCS website.

The CFA encourages accredited Units to accurately reflect their accreditation status in institutional catalogs/bulletins. For Units in which some programs are excluded from CFA accreditation, the announcement should list only those undergraduate programs that are accredited by the CFA of AAFCS.

Inaccurate Representation

If an institution or a Unit releases information that misrepresents or distorts any action by the CFA with respect to any aspect of the accreditation process, the status of affiliation with AAFCS, or the meaning of, or interpretation of the status of accreditation, the Director of Accreditation and/or the Chair of the CFA will notify the chief executive officer of the institution, the college or school dean, and the Unit administrator, citing the inaccuracies or misleading information and identifying corrective action.

If the misrepresentation or distortion is not corrected within 90 days of receipt of notification, the Chair of the CFA will release a public statement in such a form and of such content as deemed necessary to provide correct information.

ACCREDITATION PERIOD

Accreditation is granted by the CFA for a maximum of 10 years. The Unit has the responsibility for maintaining accreditation. For accreditation to continue without interruption, the Unit has the responsibility for submitting Form 5: *Application for Accreditation* prior to submitting a new self-study report on the ninth anniversary of the granting of accreditation. The Director of Accreditation will notify the Unit administrator 1 year prior to the due date of the self-study report for the subsequent term of accreditation. Failure of the Director of Accreditation to notify the Unit administration of the upcoming expiration of accreditation is not justification for an extension of an accreditation period. The procedures to be followed for subsequent granting of

accreditation are the same as those for the initial granting of accreditation.

INTERIM REPORTS

Interim reports are designed to address all major programmatic, administrative, or other changes related to any of the standards and criteria made in addressing the CFA recommendations in the letter granting accreditation. Form 6: *Interim Report* is used to submit reports by announced deadlines at 3, 5, and 7 years following accreditation. Additional interim reports may be submitted or requested as necessary.

A Unit administrator will be sent a reminder by the Director of Accreditation at least 3 months prior to the time when an interim report is due. The report is received and reviewed in the office of the Director of Accreditation and referred to the CFA for action to verify that the Unit remains in compliance with the standards and criteria.

Major changes in a Unit's academic programs, organizational structure, resources, position within the institution, critical mass of faculty and/or students to support the academic programs, or similar situations may call into question whether the Unit as originally accredited continues to exist. The Unit has the obligation to report these changes immediately for CFA consideration to determine accreditation status. The fact that the Unit as accredited no longer exists does not mean that the new entity, as altered, cannot attain accreditation. However, accreditation is not transferable from one entity to another or from one constituted entity to the entity reconstituted. When the accredited Unit ceases to exist, accreditation for that Unit may be terminated. The institution may petition CFA for continuation of accreditation for the newly formed structure.

If major programmatic, administrative, or other changes are reported by a Unit, the CFA may request that sufficient information be provided to document that the Unit remains in compliance with standards and criteria. The CFA may request additional documentation if the information is incomplete, or it may request that the Unit show cause why accreditation should not be revoked. A Unit's 10-year cycle of accreditation is not modified when the Unit provides a show cause report to the CFA.

Retention of Interim Reports

One copy of the interim reports of each accredited Unit shall be retained in the Office of Accreditation for the period of the Unit's accreditation. CFA recommends that one copy of interim reports should be retained by the Unit for the period of the Unit's accreditation.

Request for Show Cause

When questions arise regarding a Unit's compliance with the accreditation standards and criteria, the CFA will request that the institution show cause as to why the Unit's accreditation should not be revoked. Requests for show cause will be addressed to the institution's chief executive officer and the Unit administrator. A request for show cause will describe the specific information needed from the institution and Unit, citing the accreditation standards and criteria. A request for show cause will include a due date for receipt of materials from the institution.

Review of Show Cause

Through a review committee and as a committee of the whole, the CFA will review an

institution's response to a request for show cause and make a decision to continue or revoke the Unit's accreditation. In disposing of a show cause action, the CFA may require a site visit. If a site visit is required, all costs and expenses incurred by AAFCS are borne by the appellant Unit as detailed under the Fees section of this document. An initial deposit, determined by AAFCS, to defray costs shall be provided by the appellant Unit at the time of the appeal. If the costs exceed the deposit, the appellant Unit will be invoiced for the difference. If the costs are less than the deposit, a refund will be provided to the appellant Unit. The Director of Accreditation, on behalf of the CFA, will notify the institution's chief executive officer, the Unit administrator, and the college or school dean of the CFA decision.

Decision

Until the final decision by the CFA, the accreditation status of a Unit involved in a show cause action will not be affected. The decision by the CFA to initiate a show cause action is not a final decision; therefore, such a decision may not be appealed. The decision by the CFA to revoke accreditation of a Unit is a final adverse decision; therefore, such a decision may be appealed.

The name of any institution that has its accreditation revoked will be removed from AAFCS/CFA publications and websites.

PROCEDURE TO APPEAL FOR RECONSIDERATION

An institution may appeal for reconsideration of an adverse decision by the CFA if the decision is to deny a site visit, to deny accreditation, or to revoke accreditation. Questions concerning appeals shall be addressed to the AAFCS Director of Accreditation. When an accredited Unit appeals for reconsideration of an adverse CFA decision, all required communications will be transmitted to the Director of Accreditation by certified mail with return receipt requested.

Accreditation Appeals Committee

The CFA will establish and maintain an Accreditation Appeals Committee composed of five members as a standing committee, a minimum of which three will be selected by the Chair and Director to conduct the review. Committee members must have been associated with an AAFCS accredited Unit or must have previously served on CFA and should represent diversity of institutional sizes and mission. In consideration of the names submitted by the Nominating Committee, the CFA Chair will appoint committee members for no more than two consecutive terms of 2 years each.

Appeals Procedure

The procedures to be followed in an appeal are:

1. A written appeal must be made by the Unit administrator and the chief executive officer of the institution to the Director of Accreditation within 30 days of the date of receipt of notification of the decision. Specific reasons for the appeal must be set forth. There will be no change in the previous accreditation status of the appellant Unit pending disposition of an appeal.
2. Within 10 days of receipt of notification of an appeal, the Chair of the CFA, in consultation with the Director of Accreditation, shall appoint an Appeals Hearing Panel of a minimum of

three members selected from the Accreditation Appeals Committee. To the extent possible, committee members will be selected from institutions of a size and mission similar to that of the appellant Unit. The Chair of the CFA, in consultation with the Director of Accreditation, shall appoint one member of the Appeals Hearing Panel to serve as Chair of the Panel. The Chair of the Panel shall be a former member of the CFA.

3. A member of the Accreditation Appeals Committee who has conflict of interest with the appellant Unit shall not be eligible to serve on the Appeals Hearing Panel. This member must not participate in any deliberations of the Accreditation Appeals Committee regarding the case.
4. The Appeals Hearing Panel shall determine its schedule. A hearing will be scheduled within 90 days of the Panel's receipt of the appeal, and the appellant Unit and the Chair of the CFA shall receive at least 10 days in advance written notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing.
5. After the hearing is scheduled, the Director of Accreditation shall provide members of the Appeals Hearing Panel with a copy of the self-study report, the site visit report with appended institutional response, the letter of notification of CFA action, and the request for a hearing, which states the grounds for the appeal. In addition, the Panel shall have full access to all documents and records filed with the Director of Accreditation by the appellant institution during the accreditation process. A majority of the members of the Panel must be present for business to be conducted.
6. The Panel may request testimony from representatives of the appellant Unit, the site visit team, the CFA, and/or other witnesses whose statements are deemed by the Panel as potentially useful. Witnesses may present oral and written statements, as authorized by the Panel. The Chair of the Panel may set a time limit on oral presentations and shall notify all affected parties of any time limits prior to the hearing.
7. The recommendations of the Panel shall be based upon all evidence presented related to conditions existing in the Unit at the time of the CFA decision. Changes that may have occurred following the site visit or the CFA decision will not be accepted as evidence.
8. Within 10 days following the hearing of the appeal, the Panel shall, by majority vote, recommend:
 - a. that the CFA decision be affirmed, OR
 - b. that the CFA decision be set aside and the matter referred back to the CFA with suggestions for further proceedings and reconsideration.
9. The Appeals Hearing Panel shall communicate in writing within 20 business days of the hearing its recommendation, including the rationale for that recommendation, to the Director of Accreditation, the chief executive officer, and the Unit administrator of the appellant Unit.
10. In cases in which the CFA's decision is set aside and further proceedings are required, the CFA, at its next scheduled meeting, shall reconsider the earlier decision and inform in writing the Appeals Hearing Panel and the appellant Unit of the results of the reconsideration.

11. Any change in the accredited status of the appellant Unit shall be reflected in the next regularly published directory of Accredited Family and Consumer Sciences Units.
12. All costs and expenses incurred by AAFCS in providing for the Appeals Hearing Panel, the expenses incurred by the panel members, the expenses incurred in the conduct of the hearing, and all other expenses in support of the completion of the appeals procedure shall be borne by the appellant Unit. An initial deposit to defray costs shall be provided by the appellant Unit at the time of the appeal. If expenses incurred exceed the initial deposit, the appellant Unit will be assessed the additional amount. If expenses are less than the deposit, the difference will be refunded to the appellant Unit.

Rights of the Appellant Unit and CFA During a Hearing

Appeals are administrative, not judicial, hearings. The hearings on appeals are closed to the public. The parties to an appeal shall not have the right to cross-examine individuals such as AAFCS members, members of the site visit team, the CFA Chair, or members of the Appeals Hearing Panel. The Panel may ask that the Chair and members of the site visit team, Chair and members of the CFA, and representatives of the appellant Unit appear before it. During the hearing, the appellant Unit and the CFA shall have the following rights:

1. To be represented by a representative(s) of their choice. The CFA representative is to be the individual who chaired the post review committee at the time the Unit was denied.
2. To present written or oral testimony at the hearing in keeping with any time limitations on oral presentations that may be established by the Appeals Hearing Panel.
3. To receive a transcript and any related records of the hearing, upon payment of cost of reproduction.
4. To present additional evidence that either was unavailable to, undiscovered, or not considered by the CFA or the site visit team but that existed at the time of the adverse decision.
5. To be present during the entire hearing.

The Panel's deliberations following conclusion of the hearing and the Panel's subsequent decision process will be conducted in private.

Chair of the Appeals Hearing Panel

The Chair of the Appeals Hearing Panel presides with vote at the appeals hearing and sets the tone for the hearing. The burden of proof that CFA failed to recognize information in submitted documents or misinterpreted presented information rests with the appellant; however, the Chair of the Panel is responsible for ensuring a fair review with consideration of all information presented by the institution and by CFA.

The Chair of the Panel ensures that voting includes the following:

1. the first vote following discussion of materials presented is a straw vote by secret ballot;
2. if differences of opinion exist, further discussion occurs; and

3. a final vote is taken by secret ballot.

The Chair of the Panel, in consultation with Panel members, prepares a draft of the letter in which the decision is given to the chief executive officer of the institution, the dean of the college or school in which the Unit is assigned, and the Unit Chair. This letter is reviewed by the Chair of the CFA and the Director of Accreditation before being sent to the institution.

Prior to the Hearing

Prior to the hearing, Panel members review the following items:

1. the letter to the institution notifying it of the CFA action that the institution is now appealing; and
2. the self-study report, site visit report, institution's response to the site visit report, and the CFA worksheets used by CFA members.

If time does not permit sending all documents (either electronically or by land carrier) to members of the Panel for review prior to the date of the hearing, Panel members need to arrive at the hearing in ample time to review the materials prior to the hearing.

CFA Representation

The CFA representative shall be the Chair of the post-review committee and will be requested by the Chair of the CFA to develop a statement of information to be given to the Appeals Hearing Panel. The CFA representative shall make the oral presentation to the Panel and institutional representative(s). The oral report shall include the following:

1. statement of the relevant criteria under question;
2. summary of information supplied by the institution in its report for CFA action; and
3. statement of why the CFA determined the Unit had not met the standards and criteria for accreditation.

At the close of the presentation, a written copy of oral remarks identifying points relative to each addressed criterion shall be given to each member of the Panel and to the institution's representative.

Institutional Representation

The burden of proof that an incorrect accreditation decision has been made rests with the appellant. The institutional representative shall make an oral presentation and include:

1. statement of standards and criteria under question;
2. summary of information unavailable to, undiscovered by, or not considered by CFA or the site visit team but that existed at time of the adverse decision; and
3. statement as to why the decision is being appealed.

At the close of the presentation, a written copy of oral remarks identifying key points relative to each addressed criterion will be given to each member of the Appeals Hearing Panel and to the CFA representative.

Closure of Appeal

The appeal shall be closed when the original decision of the CFA is affirmed by the Appeals Hearing Panel or when the original decision has been remanded and reconsidered by the CFA.

COMPLAINTS AND ADVERSE INFORMATION

The CFA acts solely to grant or deny accreditation and to encourage the improvement of professional education within the field of study and practice. When a Unit demonstrates compliance with the standards and criteria and the CFA policies and procedures, it will be granted accreditation. When a Unit does not meet the standards and criteria, or fails to maintain compliance, it will be denied or it will forfeit accreditation.

The CFA is obligated to investigate legitimate complaints or adverse information regarding a Unit or its institution, whatever the source of the complaint or information. When any member of the CFA receives a complaint or adverse information about an accredited Unit or its institution, the member notifies the CFA Chair in writing and encloses a copy of the complaint of adverse information.

When the CFA Chair has received a complaint or adverse information regarding an accredited Unit or its institution, the Chair will notify the chief executive officer of the institution and the administrator of the Unit, requesting that the institution or Unit substantiate the report or provide data to correct any misperception or misunderstanding. The CFA Chair notifies the complainant of the request to the institution or Unit for information.

The role of the CFA in resolving complaints and investigating adverse information is to determine if a Unit is out of compliance with one or more of the accreditation criteria. Following such a determination, the CFA may:

1. terminate investigation of the complaint or adverse information, or
2. notify the chief executive officer of the institution and the Unit administrator that, based on available information, the CFA has determined that the Unit appears to be out of compliance with the accreditation standards and criteria, and it is, therefore, directed to show cause why its accreditation should not be revoked, citing the relevant criterion or criteria. The matter then proceeds as a show cause action, according to the policies and procedures of AAFCS accreditation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Decisions made by the CFA are public information and will be shared widely upon request. All deliberations and materials related to accreditation decisions about Units are considered confidential and are discussed in confidential meetings. Minutes of CFA confidential meetings will be made available to CFA members for their approval at the following CFA meeting. Before

the end of the meeting, the Director of Accreditation collects the minutes of the confidential meeting(s), retains one copy of these minutes in a permanent file, and destroys all other copies.

The minutes of confidential meetings of the CFA will include a list of CFA members present, a brief summary of the discussions and deliberations that led to an action by the CFA and the action taken by the CFA. Other than for review and approval in the CFA meeting immediately following the one in which a confidential meeting was held, the minutes of the confidential meeting of the CFA will be available to members of the CFA at the discretion of the Director of Accreditation and the Chair of the CFA.

Signed copies of individual worksheets and summary sheets related to self-study reports, site visit reports, institutional responses to site visit reports, and responses to show cause are all confidential records. The Director of Accreditation collects and retains these materials on file in the Office of Accreditation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest and ethical practice applies to the entire accrediting process from the review of the application through the final deliberations of the Council for Accreditation and includes members of the Council for Accreditation, staff, and volunteers. Every precaution shall be taken to ensure that all participants in the accrediting process develop and express objective opinions and make decisions free from self-interest and personal bias. They shall avoid conflicts of interest or any appearance of a conflict of interest between personal interests and the interests of AAFCS accreditation. Conflict of interest is defined as “a circumstance in which an individual’s capacity to make an impartial or unbiased accreditation decision may be affected because of prior, current, or anticipated institutional affiliation(s), other significant relationship(s) or association(s) with the institution under review.” (Source: Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Operational Policy A-4, Revised 2005. Website last updated 01/20/06.)

The primary responsibility for determining potential conflict of interest rests with each participant in the accrediting process. Participants who question whether they have a conflict of interest should consult with the Director of Accreditation. Members of the Council for Accreditation excuse themselves on matters where their objectivity would be compromised such as being involved in a discussion or vote related to their institution.

Examples of actual or apparent conflict of interest include the following:

1. CFA members whose Unit is being considered for accreditation;
2. a site visitor who within the last 10 years attended or graduated from an institution being considered for accreditation;
3. a CFA member, Director of Accreditation, or site visitor who has served as a consultant or was employed by an institution being considered for accreditation within the last 10 years;
4. the Unit(s) where the Director of Accreditation has been employed;
5. other activities in the recent past or in the near future where there is the expectation of a financial or governance role with the Unit; and

6. other considerations that CFA members, the Director of Accreditation, or site visitors deem pertinent.

The Council for Accreditation operates in an open and transparent manner in accordance with applicable legal requirements and with AAFCS policies and procedures, and the Code of Ethics. AAFCS accreditation earns and sustains trust with individuals, institutions, and government entities through honest, truthful, and responsible transactions.

In the event a CFA member, the Director of Accreditation, site visitor, or other volunteer does not voluntarily excuse himself/herself, CFA may take such action as the Board of Directors of AAFCS deems appropriate.

REVIEW AND REVISION OF CFA STANDARDS AND CRITERIA AND ITS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The CFA periodically reviews and revises standards and criteria by which it assesses Units for accreditation. Whenever substantive changes are considered, these are agreed to in principle by the CFA after consultation with members of the AAFCS Collegiate Assembly and others.

The CFA may amend its policies and procedures by a majority vote of the members in an official meeting, provided a quorum is present. Changes in the CFA policies and procedures become effective immediately upon their adoption, unless the motion to amend includes a specific effective date.

The CFA is aware of the planning in which Units engage in preparation for the self-study report. As such, the CFA provides an appropriate length of time from the adoption date to the mandatory implementation date for use of new standards, criteria, and policies and procedures. If a Unit's *Application for Accreditation* has been approved and the self-study report is due on a date that occurs between the adoption and the implementation dates for the new standards, criteria, and policies and procedures, a Unit may elect to use the 2001 or the 2010 standards and criteria. The Unit will inform the CFA of its choice of standards before the self-study report is due.

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III. COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION RULES OF ORDER

*Adopted March 2000
Revised November 2009*

Name

The name of the Council shall be the **COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION of the AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES**. The former shall be referred to as **CFA** and the latter as **AAFCS**.

Purposes

The Council for Accreditation exists by authority of the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences for the purpose of conducting accreditation activities of undergraduate Units. The AAFCS Council for Accreditation has earned recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The Rules of Order of CFA shall comply with the by-laws of AAFCS, and the policies and procedures of CHEA.

The CFA conducts a peer review of activities for accreditation of family and consumer sciences Units in higher education. The term "family and consumer sciences Unit" is used in lieu of college, school, division, department, or other terms. The term refers to the academic unit in the institution that prepares students in family and consumer sciences professions or in specializations within the family and consumer sciences profession. The purposes of CFA include:

1. develop, submit, evaluate, revise, and implement standards, criteria, and policies and procedures that accredited family and consumer sciences Units are expected to meet and maintain in consultation with the Collegiate Assembly;
2. evaluate the extent to which family and consumer sciences Units comply with the standards and criteria and designate the initial and continuing accreditation status of these Units;
3. develop criteria for the selection of accreditation site visitors and maintain a list of individuals meeting these criteria;
4. develop and update the scope of responsibilities of site visitors;
5. select qualified individuals to serve as site visitors and provide professional development activities to train site visitors;
6. conduct professional development activities related to all aspects of accreditation;
7. present an annual report, including a list of accredited family and consumer sciences Units, to the Collegiate Assembly, the Assembly of Higher Education, and the AAFCS Board of Directors via the Board Liaison; and
8. communicate with the Collegiate Assembly to foster continuing institutional and Association support for accreditation.

Membership

The CFA shall consist of eleven (11) members, ten (10) of whom have voting privileges.

The CFA voting members shall include: six (6) representatives of the Collegiate Assembly who are AAFCS members; two (2) members of the family and consumer sciences profession representing practicing professionals who are not university faculty and who are AAFCS members; and two (2) public members who are not directly affiliated with either higher education or other education-related professions.

The AAFCS Board of Directors Liaison serves as the ex-officio, non-voting member of the Council.

Academic and professional qualifications of individual participants in CFA activities, including the CFA members, administrative personnel, and site visitors will be available on request.

A. Nominations and Appointments

The six representatives of the Collegiate Assembly shall be elected from accredited Units of AAFCS in accordance with the Collegiate Assembly's Rules of Order.

The practicing professionals and the public members shall be nominated by the CFA Nominating Committee and appointed by the AAFCS President.

The AAFCS President appoints the Board of Directors Liaison.

B. Tenure of Membership

The tenure for the Collegiate Assembly representatives is three (3) years with two (2) members being elected each year.

The tenure for the AAFCS Board Liaison is determined by appointment of the AAFCS President.

The tenure of the practicing professionals and public members is three (3) years with nominations by the CFA and appointment by the AAFCS President.

C. Reappointment

Any CFA representative may be re-elected or re-appointed to succeed himself/herself only one (1) time. Therefore, each CFA representative may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.

D. Continuation of Service

If a member of the CFA changes his or her employment so that he or she no longer meets the criteria by which he or she was elected or appointed to the CFA or if a member of the CFA retires, he or she may continue service on the CFA until the end of the present term.

E. Conflict of Interest

Any CFA representative with conflicts of interest with a Unit under review shall declare the conflict and refrain from participating in all discussions, review procedures, and decisions.

F. Vacancies

If a CFA member is absent from two (2) consecutive, regularly scheduled meetings, the member shall resign from the CFA.

Vacancies resulting from the resignation of an elected member from the CFA shall be filled by the appointment of a new AAFCS member from an accredited Unit of AAFCS to fulfill the end of the unexpired term. The Executive Committee of the Collegiate Assembly is responsible for filling the vacancy.

The Executive Committee of the CFA has responsibility for nominating qualified practicing professionals and public members when a vacancy occurs. The AAFCS President is responsible for accepting nominations from the Executive Committee to fill the vacancy on CFA that occurs by resignation of practicing professionals and public members.

Officers

A. Officers

The elected officers of the CFA shall be Chair-elect, Chair, and secretary.

B. Responsibilities of Officers

1. The Chair-elect shall serve one (1) year as Chair-elect, and the following year as Chair. The duties of the Chair-elect include:
 - a. preside in the absence of the Chair;
 - b. serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee;
 - c. select one (1) member from the current CFA membership to serve on the Nominating Committee; and
 - d. assist the Director of Accreditation in:
 1. selection and training of site visitors;
 2. planning AAFCS programs on accreditation; and
 3. other operational procedures as requested by the Chair.
2. The Chair's responsibilities include:
 - a. preside at all CFA meetings;
 - b. serve on the HEU Finance Committee;
 - c. serve as an ex-officio member of the Collegiate Assembly Executive Committee;
 - d. prepare an annual report for distribution to the Collegiate Assembly, the HEU, and AAFCS Board of Directors; and

- e. work with the Director of Accreditation to:
 - 1. develop the agenda for CFA meetings;
 - 2. appoint members for review of applications for accreditation;
 - 3. establish the self-study report and site visit report committees;
 - 4. provide leadership for communication with the CHEA; and
 - 5. appoint members of the Accreditation Appeals Committee in consideration of names submitted by the Nominating Committee; select one member to chair the Committee.

- 3. The secretary serves a two (2) year term. The duties of the secretary include:
 - a. record the minutes of all official meetings of the CFA;
 - b. prepare them for circulation and filing; and
 - c. serve on the Nominating Committee.

C. Eligibility

The Chair-elect and secretary shall be elected from the voting members of the CFA.

D. Elections

The Chair-elect and secretary shall be elected by a majority of those participating in the spring meeting. The Chair-elect shall serve one (1) year as Chair-elect, and one (1) year as Chair. The secretary shall serve for two (2) years. All elected officers shall take office immediately after the AAFCS Annual Conference.

Meetings

A. Meetings

The CFA shall hold at least two (2) meetings annually. Regularly scheduled meetings are usually held in the fall and spring. Meetings may be called at other times as the Executive Committee deems necessary. Meetings may be canceled by majority vote of the Executive Committee.

B. Quorum to Conduct CFA Business

A quorum shall consist of half plus one (1/2 + 1) of the total voting members. A decision must receive a majority of the votes cast by the voting members of the CFA who are participating in order to become the action of the CFA.

Committees

The CFA conducts the business of accreditation through standing and ad hoc committees.

A. Standing Committees of the CFA

1. **Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of CFA. A staff liaison will be assigned by the AAFCS Executive Director.

The duties of the Executive Committee shall be to:

- a. arrange for all meetings of the CFA;
 - b. conduct related planning and assessment as necessary in the accreditation process;
 - c. establish ad hoc committees as necessary and name the committee members; and
 - d. recommend consultants to serve family and consumer sciences Units when requested.
2. **Nominating Committee:** The Nominating Committee shall consist of three (3) members: the current secretary, the Chair-elect who serves as Chair of the Nominating Committee and one member of the current CFA selected by the Chair-elect. Nominations for the CFA officers shall occur prior to the spring meeting for election during the spring meeting. The Nominating Committee shall submit a slate of officers with a minimum of one (1) name for Chair-elect and secretary. The Committee shall assume a leadership role in seeking nominations for practicing professionals and public members to serve as CFA members. At the spring meeting, the Nominating Committee shall present nominees for appointment to the Accreditation Appeals Committee.
 3. **Accreditation Appeals Committee:** The Accreditation Appeals Committee shall consist of five (5) members. Committee members must have been associated with an AAFCS accredited Unit or must have previously served on a CFA and should represent diversity of institutional size and mission. Committee members may be appointed for no more than two (2) consecutive terms of two (2) years each. The Director and Chair shall appoint appeals panels from the Accreditation Appeals Committee membership as needed.

B. Ad Hoc Committees

Advisory committees may be appointed as necessary to study specific matters related to accreditation and to make recommendations regarding the same.

Parliamentary Authority

Except as otherwise provided in these Rules of Order, the CFA proceedings will be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.

Amendments

These Rules of Order may be amended as follows:

1. At a meeting of the CFA by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the official representatives

participating and voting (proposed amendments must be distributed at least two (2) months prior to the meeting); or

2. By electronic or mail ballot, at least two (2) months prior to a CFA meeting with two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast prevailing.

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