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Explaining the Ownership of AACSB Accreditation Documents

Recently, the AACSB accreditation staff has had a number of conversations with volunteers about the ownership of reports and documents filed with AACSB by schools seeking initial or maintenance of accreditation. Similar conversations have extended to the status of official correspondence from AACSB relative to accreditation matters.

First, documents filed with AACSB by schools involved in the accreditation process (pre-accreditation, initial or maintenance) are considered the property of the school filing the documents. AACSB will not release any of these documents without the written permission of the school or as may be required by law. Furthermore, AACSB staff or volunteers cannot modify any document submitted by a school that is involved in an accreditation review process. That can only be done by the school. In some cases, accreditation reports submitted by schools are used in AACSB accreditation seminars and training sessions. However, these reports are never used for such purposes without the permission of the school and the removal of any proprietary or other sensitive information.

AACSB correspondence with a school relative to accreditation matters is confidential between the school and AACSB and the same rules apply. Such correspondence is often reviewed by volunteers (peer review team members and committee members) who are or have been involved with the school. AACSB will not share such correspondence outside of those formally involved unless the school under review grants permission or as required by law. The same guidance should apply to volunteers who have access to these documents.

As a natural extension of this, questions arise in regards to what volunteers may do with accreditation documents to which they have access as a result of serving on a peer review team or an accreditation committee. Again, the volunteer should consider the documents the property of the school under review. They should not be shared with other parties who are not officially involved in the accreditation process unless written permission from the school is obtained.

AACSB's volunteer network is second to none. The work of mentors, peer review team members, and accreditation committees fully support our focus on quality and continuous improvement. Of course, we can always improve. At the same time, it is appropriate to be periodically reminded of the special relationship that exists between AACSB and the schools participating in the accreditation process. That is the spirit of this message. Feedback and comments are welcomed.