

Accreditation Status

The University of the Republic is nearly in perfect alignment with all the standards for Distance Accreditation Agencies. There will continue to be issues with establishing an administrative and instructor base until the University grows in its student body and financial base. Presently, the University of the Republic is not an accredited institution.

*** However, that is not an indication of the quality of the program. Please read the following for more information regarding accreditation.**

An Accreditation Position Paper and The History and Purpose Accreditation

At the end of World War II, the nation witnessed thousands of soldiers returning from the war. The nation wasn't prepared to receive them in the work force and the soldiers didn't possess the necessary education and skills to step into a good job. For their efforts in defending this great nation, and the welfare of other nations, our national leaders came up with a low interest student loan program specific to soldiers to help prepare them for the workforce. The GI's flocked to the low interest loans.

Educators recognized a perfect way to capitalize on this new student population, and the money they were being offered by the federal government. While some of these new educational programs were well prepared, and their administrators honest in their approach, some were not. The latter group developed inferior educational products, charged a lot of money, and offered little to the student in helping them in getting prepared. Tuitional monies flowed from the federal government into the hands of all educational programs regardless of their quality, and at the discretion of the student. The result was some of these GI's were left with a poor education and possibly in debt, because they failed to research the educational program they chose before attending. Although we are all responsible for our own decisions, and education is no different from any other product offered, the federal government heard of these lower quality educational programs that were collecting the GI loans and sought to make a change.

As a result, sometime around 1952 the federal government devised a plan to orchestrate "independent" agencies that would serve the purpose of validating various educational programs in the form of accreditation. The feds would recognize certain agencies and allow them to perform the work of accrediting. From that point on, as an educational program, if you desired to collect GI loans, then you must be accredited from one of these federally recognized accreditation agencies.

The accreditation agencies would grant educational programs accreditation, for a fee, if they met certain and specific minimum standards, established by the agencies, and the federal

government would recognize those accredited educational institution as potential receivers of government backed loans. If an education program did not meet the minimal accreditation standards, or chose not to become accredited, while they could continue to offer their products, they no longer could collect government backed loans.

Accreditation was a way for the federal government to protect our GI's in the future from being scammed out of their GI loans by those who would offer an inferior and low-quality educational product, which, in the end may or may not have benefitted the student. They weren't necessarily indicating that all nonaccredited educational programs were inferior or low quality, they just wanted a structure to ensure the government backed loans were being paid out to educational programs that were "verified" to meet at least a minimal standard to ensure there is an adequate educational process and outcome for the sake of the student. It is a completely understandable idea: the money loaned to GI's is ultimately tax payer money and we all have a desire for it to go for a good purpose. If the GI's are being scammed out of money and receive nothing in return, then one could argue ... the nation could argue, something had to be done. Developing a structure of accreditation agencies was the one they came up with. Today, federally backed low interest loans are available to everyone seeking education, not just the GI's. Low interest loans decrease the overall cost of tuition and therefore are sought after first among most students.

Like every decision, there are a few issues of concern. First, to become accredited costs a lot of **money** (tens and tens of thousands). If you are a small educational program with high integrity, a great product but a small wallet, accreditation is nearly impossible to pursue, until the program becomes financially stable, which is very difficult if you're not accredited. It's a vicious circle. This is further complicated because if most students seek out federally backed low interest loans, then all nonaccredited educational programs will not even be considered by this large group of students. This leads to a second issue.

Presently, **accreditation** is almost **synonymous with credibility**. In the eyes of many, if an educational program is not accredited, it must be inferior and a scam. Other accredited programs will not recognize nonaccredited programs, the work completed will not be considered for transfer credit and degrees earned from nonaccredited programs will not be considered as valid accomplishments. The question students ask themselves, and they should, if my efforts or degree from a nonaccredited program will not be recognized in any meaningful manner, then why would I spend the time and money? And I absolutely understand their point.

Third, the manner in which the accreditation structure occurs is a very dangerous road for a free people to go down. Because of the abuses our founders endured at the hands of England, we began our nation weary of an overbearing and intrusive government. And yet, our national leaders have established a structure that literally has its hands directly in higher education. Although the claim is that there is a separation, that the accreditation agencies are "independent of government." The question begs to be asked, who accredits the accreditation agencies? Who empowers those agencies who will ultimately select the winners and losers of educational programs? Given all of the recent government intrusions in our personal lives and

in business matters, the question Americans need to ask is, do we trust the government when they claim a separation from accreditation agencies, an independence among accreditation agencies who feel no government pressures to perform in a specific manner, according to a particular belief, or in alignment with a certain political ideology? It's a question we should all be asking.

Another issue with the government establishing such a structure and rules for having access to the low interest loans is that it ultimately creates obstacles for private businesses to gain a footing in the market of education. The creation of a program that makes it easy for GI's to get an education is a great idea. GI's have put their lives in harm's way, that we may continue to live free. Establishing a plan to protect tax payer monies and to ensure GI's from being scammed out of their loan monies, is a good idea. Establishing a mechanism to verify that an educational institution is worthy to collect tax payer, government backed, low interest loans, is a good idea. Permitting that mechanism to operate in a manner that puts new educational programs in financial jeopardy, is not good.

There are several reasons the above statement is true. It impedes the "pro-private sector" ideology in several ways. Nonaccredited educational programs are immediately separated from the largest block of students; those who seek and are granted government backed student loans. The government established these rules, and it has a direct effect on small nonaccredited educational programs. The cost of gaining accreditation is ultimately endorsed by the government by permitting it to continue. The accreditation agencies can dictate their fees. If a small nonaccredited agency desires accreditation, but cannot afford it, or does not want to place the program in financial disarray, then they are relegated to a fraction of the possible student population. Among this small block of potential students, if the student doesn't have access to the loans, then the educational program must lower tuition dramatically, so the student can afford to pay for it in cash. If the student has access to private loans, again, to make sense of the overall cost of the program, tuition must be decreased dramatically. Either way, it's not good for the new nonaccredited educational program.

Accreditation was an idea to protect tax payer government backed loans that were being provided to GI's. What it has resulted in is a government induced, private sector destruction ball for new, small, financially challenged, nonaccredited educational programs. This is why we don't want an intrusive government overburdening the system with excessive rules and regulations. We should be encouraging people to make good decisions in their own behalf. If the government felt the need to regulate GI education, then the better solution may have been to simply indicate which colleges and universities the GI's could attend to gain a proper education. That would have been an easy fix, without regulations that affected everyone. In fact, the government runs their own military schools. How simple would it have been to simply create a West Point GI reservist college whose sole purpose would be to educate those GI's who gave their time to one of the services. For those GI's who couldn't relocate, a correspondence program could have been established: a perfect solution.

Fourth, is an aspect of a point mentioned above, we, as a free people, should have the desire to maintain the right to make our own decisions. When the government steps in and makes things happen that effect that right, it's a potential problem. What accreditation does is not only a benefit to the GI, it's an added benefit to the future employers (tongue in cheek). If an employer knows a candidate has graduated from an "accredited" institution, they may assume what everyone today seems to assume, that the education a student received is, must be, high quality. It makes it so the employer doesn't have to extreme vet candidates. Ultimately, it makes them lazy.

When an employer considers two candidates who have graduated from, say, Harvard and Michigan State, they may assume the candidate from Harvard is the better candidate. It's reputation alone is enough for a company to select its potential employees. If the candidates are from Michigan State and say, Fresno State, they may assume the candidate from Michigan State is the better candidate. Most people don't even know where Fresno is. Although Fresno State offers a high-quality product, the reputation of Michigan State is arguably greater. If the candidates are from Fresno State and say, a nonaccredited university, they you may assume the candidate from Fresno State is the better candidate. Companies base their decisions on reputation and accreditation status alone, in almost all cases: sometimes just an education or degree. The problem with this decision-making strategy is, if one of those candidates was, say, Bill Gates and the employer was an IT company, they would have over looked the greatest resource they could have ever imagined, because Bill Gates never finished college. The point is, by simply considering accreditation, reputation or a college education as the standard for hiring candidates, companies are becoming lazy, placing too much confidence in what other people and agencies are stating. President Bush, 43, graduated from Yale. There were many who questioned Yale's integrity as an accredited degree granting institution. Yale has a long-standing reputation, possibly nearly 200 years, and long before accreditation. Not that it needs it, but it is accredited as well. The point is we either believe in the process or we don't.

Many of our founders received formal education, but many simply were mentored. Benjamin Franklin received a formal education until around the age of 8. After that he began apprenticeships as a candlemaker and then as a printer. He was arguably the most intelligent person ever involved in the US government. Today, he would find it difficult finding employment. The first thing a Human Resource Department would look for would be education, and then if that education was accredited. He never would have made it passed the HR clerk because we have allowed others to do our thinking.

Companies need to spend the time finding the right candidate for the right position despite reputation, education or accreditation. They need to start to entertain potential candidates based on the company's needs and the abilities and talents of the candidate. Basically, they need to vet their candidates, independent of education, accreditation or school reputation. Likewise, students need to exert their right to think for themselves and do their own homework in assessing an educational program that meets their needs. The point of education is not to seek out and graduate from an accredited university, it's receiving the best education for the purposes of the student. Students often graduate from accredited schools and walk away ill

prepared for their specific area of interest. Accreditation doesn't guarantee students they will be smarter, more informed, or better qualified if they attend accredited institutions. Gaining accreditation status just means the institution has paid the required fees and has met a minimum set of standards of which the accreditation agency has deemed important that a high-quality institution should possess. We, as a free people and independent and private businesses, need to maintain our ability, and right, to think for ourselves, and not just consider accreditation, reputation and education as the standard for hiring.

Whether it's a student preparing to apply for college or a business preparing to fill vacancies, we all need to take the responsibility in determining what best suits us, which means we must spend the time and effort in considering all options and all potential employees. If we make the right choices, then we benefit from the time and effort we put into the decision. If we don't make the right choices, then we must take responsibility for those decisions and do the best with what we have. The only people we must blame is ourselves for any decision. The alternative is a life determined by others. The government has concluded we cannot make informed decisions and wants to take over that process. We must ask ourselves, however, where will it end?

When we think of educational institutions, we tend to think of pre-existing, well established institutions that have already undergone the process of growing and expanding and reaping lots of income. Some of them have tens of thousands of students, and most of them have been in existence long before accreditation agencies. It's worth clarifying the last statement. **There was a time, not too long ago, in which accreditation agencies didn't exist, and accreditation wasn't a factor.**

But what about the new educational programs? They don't begin with lots of money, lots of students, a huge campus with beautiful buildings and well-manicured landscapes. Many of them began in the front rooms of the founder's homes. They can't afford all the overhead involved in developing an administrative and instructor base that meets the criteria of many accreditation agencies. And what about the new nonaccredited institutions who have as their mission to provide a high quality – affordable education? How do they convince the student population that what they have to offer is a great program, for a great price, and if they just trust the nonaccredited educational program, one-day accreditation may be a reality, if enough students do the same?

The administrators of the University of the Republic understand the game and it's a game that ultimately must be played. The University of the Republic is a high-quality, affordable educational institution that is offered at the right time and for the right reason. We believe the quality of some of the degrees offered from accredited institutions are not applicable in this world, and the tuition demanded for such programs is outrageous. These are the core reasons the University was founded. In addition, we believe educational institutions at all levels have intentionally disregarded a historically accurate educational prerequisite: establishing a fundamental base knowledge of America, our founding documents, and why she is so special in the world. We also believe Christianity has played a primary role in America's founding. While

we wholly endorse the First Amendment of the Constitution, we believe we are witnessing a political and ideological effort to subvert Christianity specifically. The Constitution is the very thing that makes this nation who she is. The University of the Republic offers a high quality, affordable educational program which underscores a fundamental base knowledge in America, her founding documents and Christianity.

Accreditation should be a process that doesn't render new institutions bankrupt from the get-go. It should be an established set of minimums of which if institutions want to gain accreditation, they simply submit their plans, policies, structure ... everything they have that can prove they are a quality program. If there are deficiencies established, then the institution is informed, and they make the necessary corrections. It shouldn't have to be a long drawn out process costing lots of money and time for everyone involved. But it appears that a new industry has been established in the form of accreditation agencies, to capture money from the student. The more they become established, the more they will make sure everyone understands their worth: typically, this will be in the form of more and more requirements for institutions to meet. And as they become firmly established, we will witness, in lockstep with the increases in requirements, there will be increases in the fees demanded from accreditation agencies.

Where does it end? The result of all of this will most assuredly fall onto the student in the form of higher and higher tuition. Although it is the institution who pays the accreditation fees, they will not simply bear the expense, they will pass it on to the consumer, the student, because in the end all business expenses must be recouped. If the tuitions go up, then the federal government will increase the dollar value of the loans, which will ultimately fall on the tax payer. All of this to ensure GI's won't be scammed out of government backed student loan dollars. Interesting, don't you think? In addition, and more to the point, it places undeserved stress on the new educational institutions.

The following may serve as examples of **minimal standard characteristics** of which all high-quality educational institutions should consist of; **the University of the Republic meets them all:**

To ensure the quality of the information provided;

Are the courses relevant?

Do they have meaning in today's world?

Do they offer the student a benefit upon completion?

Are they laid out in a clearly understandable manner?

Does the student have access to all the courses, by name and description, so they will know what the program will be focusing on?

Are the courses provided in a realistic manner?

Are the course materials provided in a realistic manner?

Are there educational resources provided for the student to utilize, rent, or buy that are necessary to complete each course?

Does the University provide a list of resources, required and or recommended necessary to complete courses?

Does the student have access to instructors and or administrators when questions regarding course materials arise?

Does the University provide guidelines in how to complete course assignments in regard to format, content, length, deadlines for completion?

Does the University have established policies that delineate what happens when a student fails to complete assignments?

To ensure the integrity of the program;

Is there a program focus?

Is there a published Mission Statement available to all student candidates?

Is there a published statement that clearly defines the expectations of students, including Ethical Standards?

Is there a clear and understandable structure for each degree program?

Does the student have access to the structure for each degree program?

Does the student have access to the content and requirements for each degree program?

Is there a list / table which clearly delineates the content and requirements of each program?

Does the University have an established website, physical campus, Policy and Procedures, Administrative Directives, forms, etc. that clearly establishes the focus of the program, offered degrees, costs to students etc.?

Does the program have a plan for the maintenance of academic records?

Does the University have an established plan for confidentiality issues?

Does the University have an established plan, of which the student has access to, for complaints?

To ensure the financial status of the program;

Is the program financially stable?

Does it seem likely the cost of providing an education is outweighed by tuitional costs?

Has there been an history of poor financial management at the University or among the administrators?

Does the program have a plan for the maintenance of financial and educational records?

Admissions to the University:

Does the University have a policy that establishes in a clear and understandable manner who may be a candidate for admissions?

Does the University have a policy that establishes guidelines to fairly vet the student candidates to ensure all who apply are qualified for admissions into a degree program, in regard to academic level and age?

Does the University have a policy that establishes guidelines to fairly vet the student candidates to ensure all who apply are educationally and technologically capable of completing courses that lead to a degree?

Does the University have a policy that establishes guidelines in considering all student candidates for admissions to the University despite race, religion, gender, or socio-economic status?

Does the University have a policy that establishes guidelines in how course and program fees shall be paid by the student in a clear and understandable manner?

Tuitional costs for the students:

Does the University have a policy that establishes the costs of degree programs and individual courses in a clear and understandable manner?

Does the University have a policy that establishes a plan to reimburse students who have dropped courses at various points in the school term?

Does the University have a policy that establishes a financial plan for students who fail to complete assignments and or courses?

To ensure the integrity of the administrators:

Do the administrators possess the educational and administrative experience for their respective positions?

Do the administrators meet the minimal ethical standards and personal integrity to oversee a university level, degree granting program?

Have the administrators ever been convicted of defrauding customers?

Have the administrators ever been convicted of academic or administrative dishonesty?

To ensure the integrity of instructors;

Do the instructors possess the education and experience required to facilitate a course and assist students to achieve educational and academic success?

Does the University have a policy that establishes a plan that describes the manner in which instructors are selected in terms of:

Ability to meet the job expectations;

Has the necessary education and experience;

Understands the Mission and focus of the University;

Meets and maintains all Ethical Standards of the University.

Frequently asked questions regarding federal recognition for accreditation agencies

<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/faqs-accrediting-agencies.pdf>

The following are some links to the history of university accreditation:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_education_accreditation_in_the_United_States
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_recognized_higher_education_accreditation_organizations

The following are links to accreditation agencies:

Distance accreditation agency

<http://www.deac.org/>

Religious accreditation agencies

<https://www.abhe.org/>

<http://tracs.org/>

<https://www.ats.edu/>