

It's Time for More States to Sack SACS

by Adam Kissel¹

Introduction

Getting and keeping accreditation is critical for almost all colleges in the United States. Accreditation is third-party validation that a college meets minimum standards. Not only is institutional accreditation required for participation in federal student loan programs, but without accreditation, it is hard (if not impossible) to be authorized to operate in a state.

Until recently, institutional accreditation was controlled by a cartel of “regional” accreditors that had divided the country into six regions. Accreditors would not trespass into each other’s turf.² As a result, they each had monopoly power.

All too often, they have [abused their power](#). The most common abuses of power have been in the area of university governance, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has abused its power most often. SACS, which historically has accredited colleges in 11 states, has intervened in the decisions of several of them. Accreditors also are becoming increasingly brazen in [pushing colleges ideologically](#).

-
1. The author acknowledges the important contributions of Giana DePaul in identifying material used in this report.
 2. “National” accreditors have been available as alternatives for the purpose of access to federal loan programs, but various state laws and policies and some institutions do not give equal treatment to students arriving from colleges with “national” instead of “regional” accreditation.

