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Accrediting Agency Marks 100 Years

Largest National Accreditor Celebrates Centennial of Advancing Excellence in Education

(Washington, D.C.) December 12, 2012 – The oldest and largest accreditor of degree-granting, independent career colleges and schools marked its 100th birthday with a renewed commitment to the quality and integrity of workforce development, and the initiation of a new research project targeting “underemployment” and the generation of Americans most affected by the phenomenon.

The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) was formed by 23 Midwestern business school owners in Chicago on December 12, 1912 as the National Association of Accredited Career Schools. At that time, founder Benjamin Franklin Williams pronounced his intentions without equivocation: “To develop and maintain higher educational, business, and ethical standards in commercial education...”

One hundred years later, with the contribution of independent career education to the nation’s workforce development more crucial than ever, ACICS has reinforced its role as a primary guarantor of the quality and integrity of colleges and schools offering programs that lead to professional, technical or occupational careers.

“ACICS’ program of accreditation has been strengthened with higher standards for student achievement, independent verification of institutional performance metrics, and greater transparency of educational outcomes,” Albert C. Gray, executive director and CEO, said. “It is appropriate on the occasion of our 100th birthday to reflect on the contributions career education has made to the development of our country’s social and economic well-being.

Gray continued, “Likewise, it is crucial that we derive impetus from this milestone to strengthen and enhance the capacity of independent colleges and schools to develop a globally competitive workforce in the 21st Century.”

In support of contemporary workforce development, ACICS is launching its second major research project in two years. The study will survey the dimensions and expectations of the “underemployed” generation through a series of interviews and discussions. The research will inform ACICS’ development and modification of standards for independent career colleges and schools.

ACICS' first research project, "Workforce Skills Reality Check," revealed that many hiring decision-makers believe that the post-secondary education system could do a better job preparing students for the workplace. Results were unveiled at the National Press Club on December 5, 2011, where Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC), chair of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training, delivered a keynote address. Following Rep. Foxx's address, experts in workforce development and education – including representatives from The Washington Post, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience, Coalition for Educational Success, Neumont University and Center for American Progress – held a discussion.

For more information about the ACICS Centennial, consult "Setting Standards: 100 Years of Accredited Career Education," excerpts of which are available at www.acics.org.

To learn more about ACICS' 100-year history, visit <http://www.youtube.com/user/acicscouncil>. Additional information is available on ACICS' website (www.acics.org), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ACICSaccredits) and Twitter handle (www.twitter.com/acicsaccredits).

About the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

Founded in 1912, the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools is one of the most respected and longest established national accreditors of academic institutions in the United States. It is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). ACICS accredits more than 900 private post-secondary institutions offering certificates or diplomas, as well as institutions offering associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees in programs designed to educate students for professional, technical or occupational degrees. For more information, please visit www.acics.org.