

## **Initial ALA Accreditation Step One: Precandidacy Application**

A report on the status of the program and a plan for achieving candidacy status are the two most critical elements of a precandidacy application. *Accreditation Process, Policies, and Procedures* (AP3), 4<sup>th</sup> ed., section I.8, details the requirements for achieving and maintaining Precandidacy status.

Precandidacy status represents a “commitment to achieving ALA accreditation.” A program is therefore not expected to be in compliance with the Standards at this point in the process.

### **PAST LESSONS**

Past applications have shown how difficult it is for those working within the program to describe it adequately or clearly. They are too close to the subject. Someone outside the program needs to review the application against the requirements. This is also true of the eventual Self-Study. Many accredited programs struggle with this. Office for Accreditation staffers provide advice and can offer names of qualified individuals to consult on the process.

#### **Be sure the application answers these questions:**

- What is the projected size of the faculty?
- What is the anticipated size of student enrollment?
- What is the relationship between the projected size of the faculty and the student body?
- What additional personnel and physical resources will be committed to support the Program?
- On what are these projections based?

#### **Standard I Systematic Planning**

Provide a clear statement of mission, goals, and objectives for the program, consistent with the values of the school and parent institution. Be sure that the goals and objectives clearly describe the constituencies served by the program. Describe how the objectives will be assessed. Describe the systematic planning process that will assure ongoing compliance with each area of the *Standards*.

#### **Standard II Curriculum**

This standard requires that “The curriculum is based on goals and objectives, and evolves in response to an ongoing systematic planning process involving representation from all constituencies.” Be sure to provide evidence of a planning and outcomes assessment process that informs a systematic plan for the curriculum. This standard further requires evidence that the “curriculum provides the opportunity for students to construct coherent programs of study that allow individual needs, goals, and aspirations to be met.”

#### **Standard III Faculty**

This standard requires evidence of plans for developing faculty stated in relation to program objectives. An application that includes plans to increase the faculty size must also show evidence of committed support from the parent institution for increasing the size of the faculty.

#### **Standard IV Students**

This standard requires that students be able to “construct a coherent plan of study that allows individual needs, goals, and aspirations to be met within the context of requirements established by

