

Commission on English Language Program Accreditation 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

CEA operates under the discipline of a strategic plan to ensure that CEA's mission as a specialized accrediting agency and its responsibilities to accredited programs and institutions and the field are intentionally fulfilled. Through 2015, CEA operated under a strategic plan adopted in 2009. That plan was developed prior to passage of the Accreditation of English Language Training Programs Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-306, commonly called the "Accreditation Act"), which resulted in significant changes to the intensive English program (IEP) environment and resulted a tripling of the number of sites accredited by CEA between 2011 and 2013. During that rapid growth, CEA operations and staff grew correspondingly. Throughout, CEA continued to provide focused and effective support for sites undergoing the accreditation process, and the Commission continued to govern CEA in keeping with model practices for accreditation agencies.

CEA, transformed, is now in a new age. In its form as a large and complex accrediting agency, it is stable, soundly operated, and service oriented. Accredited sites, which comprise the Constituent Council, rely on CEA for key services and support, and they are responsible to CEA for complying with standards and meeting the obligations that pertain to CEA's grant of accreditation. Thus, CEA's future must include a focus on being aware of and effectively serving the needs of Constituent Council members as well as ensuring their compliance with standards. At the same time, CEA is now in a position to respond to new opportunities through initiatives that align with its scope, mission, and commitment to quality in the field, particularly those that expand CEA's influence as a driver for standards and continuous improvement. Meanwhile, as a matter of its basic charge, CEA must respond proactively to certain trends and developments in the field. Overarching themes must include maintaining and enhancing the value of CEA accreditation, sustaining CEA's reputation as a highly regarded agency that is well-governed and well-operated, and continuing to play a central role in elevating quality in the field. CEA must pursue these themes while maintaining its independence and focus on accreditation.

The 2016 - 2020 Strategic Plan announces four strategic priorities, each with supporting goals, approved by the Commission at its December 2015 meeting. The strategic planning initiative began in early 2015, when the Commission engaged a professional consultant with expertise in organizational transformation and planning. An environmental scan was conducted through interviews with current and former

Commissioners that identified CEA's strengths and weaknesses, as well as trends in the field and the resulting opportunities and anticipated challenges of the next five years. At its April 2015 meeting the Commission conducted a review of the quality of its performance as an accrediting agency and as a non-profit association, and participated in a strategic planning retreat to identify strategic priorities and goals and ways they could be met. At its August 2015 meeting, the Commission reviewed and revised the draft plan. Following final discussion and review, the 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan was approved at the December 2015 meeting.

CEA Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020

Vision

CEA strives to meet its mission and to exemplify its values in all of its activities. As a result of its mission, values, and this strategic plan, the field will view CEA as a source of expertise, leadership, and excellence in the area of accreditation and good practice. The value of CEA accreditation will be recognized worldwide; ESL/EFL programs, institutions, and professionals will aspire to be associated with CEA; and CEA accreditation will bring pride and confidence to its accredited programs and institutions.

CEA will serve all types of programs and institutions within its scope with efficiency and excellence, ensuring their continuous improvement and compliance with the *CEA Standards*. CEA will continue to be a high-performing non-profit organization and exemplary specialized accreditation agency. CEA will maintain strong infrastructure, including volunteers and personnel, technology, procedures, and resources, to meet these commitments. CEA's prevailing commitment to students and the public continues to ensure that accredited sites comply with the *CEA Standards*, as a mark of reliable operation and quality assurance.

By adopting this strategic plan, CEA will broaden and deepen its success in meeting these commitments, while increasing its active outreach and development of initiatives that advance CEA's mission, values, and vision.

Mission

The mission of the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation is to promote excellence in the field of English language teaching and administration, as well as to protect the interests of students, through accreditation of English language programs and institutions worldwide. CEA achieves its mission by advancing widely-held standards to foster continuous program development through a rigorous process of regular self-assessment and peer evaluation.

Values

Leading through Advancing Standards

We lead by setting widely accepted standards in English language instruction and administration and by ensuring that the standards reflect current best practice in language teaching, learning, and administration.

Advocating for Students

We recognize the students' need for appropriate, effective, language-learning opportunities. We believe that students have a right to the instruction and services promised by the program or institution.

Respecting Differences

We believe excellence takes many forms. We respect the variety of missions, goals, and models of English language programs and institutions. We recognize the rights and responsibilities of each program and institution to identify and implement its educational philosophy, methods and approaches in its cultural and economic environment while meeting the standards.

Supporting Success

We believe in the potential of each program or institution to achieve accredited status, and we support programs and institutions in their efforts to meet the standards.

Promoting Continuous Improvement, Development, and Learning

We believe that the standards and the accreditation process provide the basis for program self-evaluation, improvement, and, ultimately, development of quality programs for students. We encourage administrators, faculty, and staff in English language programs to become involved in a process that offers an opportunity for individual learning and growth. We also encourage continuous learning and growth for CEA volunteers and staff.

Acting with Integrity and Care

We are committed to serving our community with professional integrity. We strive to maintain open communication, transparency, accountability, confidentiality, respect, consistency, and fairness throughout the accreditation process. An ethic of care pervades the work of reviewers, commissioners, and staff.

Embracing Collaborative Judgment

We acknowledge the power of collaboration in both the program review and the decision-making process. We value the expertise of members of the profession, the wider professional community, and the accreditation professionals who participate in the process of self-study and review.

2016 – 2020 Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 1: Maintain CEA's stature as a well-respected specialized accrediting agency that leads the field to adopt and maintain standards of good practice.

- **Goal 1.1:** Broaden through outreach the understanding of CEA as an effective, well-operated, standards- and values-driven specialized accrediting agency.
- **Goal 1.2:** Promote the value of CEA accreditation to students, the public, the field, and programs and institutions.
- **Goal 1.3:** Identify and form strategic alliances and project/initiative-based partnerships that advance CEA's mission, while maintaining CEA's position as a specialized accreditor and as a separate and independent accreditation agency.

Strategic Priority 2: Strengthen accredited programs and institutions through service and outreach to sites and robust support for their continuous improvement.

- **Goal 2.1:** Determine the needs of accredited sites and develop effective responses and resources.
- **Goal 2.2:** Develop and deliver a range of services / events to support sites' continuous improvement, compliance with standards, and professional development needs.
- **Goal 2.3:** Build capacity and use technology effectively to serve and benefit constituents.
- **Goal 2.4:** Identify and implement methods to strengthen the Constituent Council as a body.

Strategic Priority 3: Expand and diversify activities and services where CEA has expertise to do so or where required by changes in the field.

- **Goal 3.1:** Monitor trends in the field and determine when CEA can or must constructively respond by changing or expanding CEA's scope, developing additional or collateral standards, and/or creating additional accreditation initiatives.
- **Goal 3.2:** Serve as a resource to international programs, institutions, and organizations that are striving to implement quality assurance initiatives.

- Goal 3.3: Conduct, sponsor, support, and/or disseminate research that is relevant to CEA’s mission, enhances CEA’s accreditation processes, serves accredited programs and institutions, and/or makes significant contributions to the field.

Strategic Priority 4: Ensure that CEA continues to operate as a highly effective organization both as a USDE-recognized specialized accrediting agency and as a non-profit organization.

- Goal 4.1: Ensure that CEA continues to be proactively governed as an ethical, high performing, financially sound non-profit association.
- Goal 4.2: Ensure that CEA continues to function as an exemplary specialized accrediting agency and that it continues to meet USDE recognition criteria.
- Goal 4.3: Maintain a staff that has exceptional knowledge of the field and accredited sites, that is prepared to implement CEA’s strategic priorities, and that operates in ways that that align with the CEA Values.
- Goal 4.4: Cultivate knowledge about CEA among professionals in the field at all stages of their careers in order to ensure that peer volunteers are committed to CEA’s values and service as reviewers and Commissioners, and to identify and nurture future CEA leaders.

Plan adopted by the 2015 Commission

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