



## **Statement from the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) on the Outcome of the U.S. Department of Education's Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization (AIM) Negotiated Rulemaking Committee**

The Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) does not support the consensus vote by the U.S. Department of Education's Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization (AIM) negotiated rulemaking committee.

No Secretary-recognized programmatic accreditors were given a vote at the table, even though they make up sixty percent of all recognized accreditors. The primary negotiator selected by the Department to represent programmatic accreditors is not affiliated with a recognized programmatic accrediting agency. Recognized programmatic accreditors, speaking with one voice, made clear to their primary negotiator that they did not support consensus.

Our member accreditors partner with higher education institutions, the states, and the federal government to improve higher education in America, and the regulations proposed by the U.S. Department of Education would harm our work to ensure quality education and training.

Rather than fulfilling the stated intention of making accreditation more efficient and less costly, the regulations proposed by the U.S. Department of Education would impose new burdens on institutions and accreditors and drive up costs.

The proposed regulations would dismantle key features of the peer review process that underpins our longstanding systems of postsecondary quality assurance. They also exceed the authority granted to the Secretary of Education by Congress in the Higher Education Act, regulating far beyond the limits set by Congress in statute.

Peer review of highly technical, specialized fields is essential to student success by producing competent graduates responsible for the care and safety of millions of Americans in fields including healthcare, engineering, education, and law. The proposed regulations would remove peer review from key steps in the accreditation process and impose new top-down government prescriptions that do not support the needs of students, institutions, or the public.

In terms of both the format and content, this rulemaking reflects a lack of partnership and trust. ASPA will comment on the proposed rule once published by the Department. ASPA looks forward to continued partnership with its members to advocate for good accreditation policy and practice while producing good outcomes and competent graduates.

### **About ASPA**

*ASPA is a national voluntary association of 59 specialized and professional accreditors that advance accreditation policy and practice and collectively accredit more than 28,000 programs at postsecondary institutions worldwide.*