

## U.S. Department of Education Staff Report

to the

Senior Department Official on Recognition Compliance Issues

### Recommendation Page

1. **Agency:** Transnational Association Of Christian Colleges and Schools ( 1991 / 2016)  
(The dates provided are the date of initial listing as a recognized agency and the date of the agency's last grant of recognition.)
2. **Action Item:** Compliance Report
3. **Current Scope of Recognition:** The accreditation and preaccreditation ("Candidate" status) of Christian postsecondary institutions in the United States that offer certificates, diplomas, and associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees, including institutions that offer distance education.
4. **Requested Scope of Recognition:** Same as above.
5. **Date of Advisory Committee Meeting:** 05/22/2018
6. **Staff Recommendation:** Renew the agency's recognition for three years.
7. **Issues or Problems:** None

### Executive Summary

#### PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGENCY

The Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) is an institutional accreditor. Its current scope of recognition is the accreditation and pre-accreditation ("Candidate" status) of Christian postsecondary institutions that offer certificates, diplomas, and associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees, including institutions that offer distance education. TRACS accredits or pre-accredits 54 institutions in 22 states. TRACS accredits or pre-accredits 67 institutions in 22 states and 5 foreign countries. TRACS' accreditation provides a link to Title IV funding for 43 of its institutions and a link to Title III funding for four of its Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) institutions.

#### Recognition History

TRACS received initial recognition in July 1991 and has maintained continued recognition since that time. The agency was last reviewed for renewal of recognition at the spring 2016 meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI or the Committee). Both Department staff and NACIQI recommended to the senior Department official to continue the agency's recognition and require it to come into compliance within 12 months, and submit a compliance report within 30 days thereafter that demonstrates the agency's compliance with the issue identified in the staff report. The senior Department official concurred with the recommendations. That compliance report is the subject of the current analysis.

Since the agency's last review, the Department has received no 3rd party comments or complaints.

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#### PART II: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

##### 602.15 Administrative and fiscal responsibilities

**(2) Competent and knowledgeable individuals, qualified by education and experience in their own right and trained by the agency on their responsibilities, as appropriate for their roles, regarding the agency's standards, policies, and procedures, to conduct its on-site evaluations, apply or establish its policies, and make its accrediting and preaccrediting decisions, including, if applicable to the agency's scope, their responsibilities regarding distance education and correspondence education;**

Previous issue: When the agency's petition was reviewed in June 2016, Department staff found that the agency did not demonstrate that it has updated all applicable printed materials, including its on-site review documents, to reflect its current definition of distance education. It is also requested to document that its on-site review team pool members have received training on the implementation of its revised definition of distance education.

Discussion: The agency provided documentation demonstrating that it has updated all applicable printed materials, including its on-site review documents, to reflect its current definition of distance education (DE). As stated in the agency narrative, the agency

undertook an extensive review of all relevant printed materials and on-site documentation. As evidenced in Exhibit 1, Document Review and Revision, the agency noted the relevant documents that they reviewed, the date the document was reviewed, and any action taken subsequent to the review, if any action was required. However, the agency did not provide the Accreditation Manual, the Institutional Change Form, and the Self-Study Template that they noted in Exhibit 1 were updated to reflect the current definition of DE.

Additionally, the agency provided documentation of their updated Evaluation Team Report to reflect the current definition of DE (Exhibit 2, Evaluation Team Report Template). The agency provided evidence that the updated Evaluation Team Report Template was distributed to all relevant staff, and required that all relevant staff verify that they received the Evaluation Team Report, and acknowledge that they will utilize the Evaluation Team Report in all subsequent on-site Evaluation Team visits (Exhibit 3 Staff Email Evaluation Team Report Template Usage).

Furthermore, the agency has provided sufficient documentation demonstrating that all of the agency's on-site review team pool members have received training on the implementation of its revised definition of DE. As noted in the agency narrative, the agency reviewed and updated its Evaluation Team Orientation presentation (Exhibit 4 Evaluation Team Orientation PowerPoint) and its Peer Evaluator Pool Training presentation (Exhibit 5 Teleconference Peer Evaluator Training PowerPoint) to reflect its current definition of DE. These presentations were used to provide training to peer evaluator pool members at the Agency's annual conference, as well as at orientation sessions during evaluation team visits. The agency noted that these presentations were updated to ensure that the appropriate definition of DE is being utilized in all peer evaluator training sessions, and future on-site evaluations. The agency additionally provided peer evaluator pool members with the updated Distance Education and Correspondence Education Training Manual (Exhibit 6 DE CE Training Manual), that reflected the current definition of DE. The agency provided documentation to demonstrate certification of 29 peer evaluator pool members that participated in the training sessions (Exhibit 8 Peer Evaluator Training Certification).

**Analyst Remarks to Response:**

In response to the draft staff analysis, the agency provided documentation demonstrating that it has updated all applicable printed materials, including its on-site review documents, to reflect its current definition of distance education.

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**PART III: THIRD PARTY COMMENTS**

The Department did not receive any written third - party comments regarding this agency.