

**From:** Chris Robinson <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 10:05 AM  
**To:** Brncick, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Robin Seabrook <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Comprehensive Accreditation Update - Joliet Junior College

Dear Mr. Brncick,

As 2020 draws to an end, we would like to offer an update to the programs undergoing comprehensive accreditation including Joliet Junior College. NCOPE is a Committee on Accreditation (CoA) of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), which serves as the accreditor for the O&P technician program at your institution. While CAAHEP has offered forums for CoAs to learn and discuss a response to the changes in education resulting from COVID-19, they have not defined explicit guidelines regarding accreditation activities during these unprecedented times given the unique factors tied to each profession and academic institution. Instead, CAAHEP has given each CoA considerable autonomy in its approach. In light of CAAHEP's stance, we would like to outline the following factors:

1. CAAHEP allows up to ten (10) years between accreditation cycles but allows shorter intervals as dictated by the individual CoAs. NCOPE has historically run on five (5) year cycles and none of the programs actively undergoing re-accreditation are in jeopardy of falling outside this window.
2. All of the programs undergoing re-accreditation have submitted detailed annual reports via the Accreditation Management Portal (AMP) that go beyond the minimum documentation sought by CAAHEP offering NCOPE a more in-depth view of the program's ability to meet the educational standards.
3. It has always been the philosophy of NCOPE to perform site visits that capture a program undergoing routine education operations so that site visitors could make observations reflective of "normal" educational activities.

Given the factors above, none of the CAAHEP accredited education programs are at risk of losing their accreditation. Furthermore, all academic institution's faculty members/administrators have been diligent in their communication with NCOPE and submission of data captured in the AMP. At this time, we had hoped to have the opportunity to observe O&P programs returning to their typical operations to enable the scheduling of on-campus site visits but sadly this will likely not be possible anytime soon. While we prefer to provide site visitors the opportunity to observe programs under typical circumstances, we recognize the need to explore other approaches. The chair of the accreditation committee, Sue Spaulding, has been working closely with site-visitors, self-study reviewers, and the NCOPE staff to develop updated training and "virtual" site visit protocols to enable the accreditation process to move forward during these challenging times. We will reach out to each O&P program individually in January of 2021 to discuss their unique circumstances and the best way to move forward. Thank you for your tremendous commitment to the O&P profession and your flexibility as NCOPE navigates the current environment.

Sincerely,

Chris Robinson, MS, MBA, CPO, ATC, FAAOP(D)  
Clinical Resource Director

Robin C. Seabrook  
Executive Director