PREPARING FOR SELF EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

FALL 2014

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES,
WESTERN ASSOCIATION FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES (ACCJC)

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GROUND RULES

• This is a learning environment: all questions welcome.

• ACCJC staff are not generally "evaluators." That is the role of teams and of the Commission.
**Today's Session**

- Accreditation and the ACCJC
- The Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards
- Evaluating Compliance with USDE Regulations and Commission policies
- The Requirements for Evidence in Institutional Self Evaluation
- Organizing the college for self evaluation and ACCJC resources
- Format of the Self Evaluation of Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Report
- The Quality Focus Essay: New section of Self Evaluation Report, in lieu of self-identified action plans (planning agendas)
- The site visit

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**Some Demographic Information**

- How many classified staff members in the room?
- How many academics (using ACCJC protocol)?
  - How many faculty (using ACCJC protocol)?
- How many administrators (using ACCJC protocol)?
- Any others (students, trustees, more)?
  - Who else will need to participate in the Self Evaluation process?
  - How are roles identified and explained?
ACCREDITATION AND THE ACCJC

PURPOSES OF ACCREDITATION

- To assure the public that education provided by institutions meets acceptable levels of quality through:
  - Maintaining accreditation standards which represent excellent practices in higher education
  - Ongoing cycles of evaluation within member institutions
  - Comprehensive institutional self evaluation, followed by review of external evaluation team
  - Identification of deficiencies with timelines for resolution

Public Disclosure

Continued
PURPOSES OF ACCREDITATION

- Continuous promotion of institutional improvement beyond meeting Standards
- Maintaining the high quality of higher education in the region and in the United States (moving the bar of excellence)

FACT OR MYTH?

"Accreditation Standards are written with little input from ACCJC member institutions."
**ACCJC Carries Out These Purposes**

- Establishing standards of quality based on excellent practices in higher education
- Evaluating institutions with these standards using a three-part peer review process that entails:
  - institutional self evaluation (internal)
  - external review
  - Commission review

Continued

**ACCJC Carries Out These Purposes**

- By Commission review and action as a decision and policy-making body
- By requiring the institutions to make all reports and action letters available to the public
- By communicating accrediting decisions to the institution
- By notifying governmental agencies and the public (*ACCJC News, Directory*)
REAFFIRMATION AND LEVELS OF SANCTION

- Current Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions
- Current practice- recommendations to meet Standards or improve effectiveness
- Changes being considered
  - Reaffirmation for one year
  - Sanctions: generally no more than 18 months to meet the standard(s); more severe conditions will warrant shorter time

SOME RESOURCES FOR SELF EVALUATION COMMITTEES AND WRITING TEAMS

(Available on ACCJC.org website)
ACCJC PUBLICATIONS TO SUPPORT THE SELF EVALUATION PROCESS

GUIDE TO EVALUATING INSTITUTIONS

ACCREDITATION REFERENCE HANDBOOK

MANUAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL SELF EVALUATION

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE SELF EVALUATION PROCESS

• Guidelines for Review of Financial Resources (handout)
• C-RAC Student Learning: Principles for Good Practices (handout)
• C-RAC Regional Accreditation and Student Learning: A Guide for Institutions and Evaluators (handout)
• Accreditation Basics – Online course (2002 Standards)
NEW: CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND COMMISSION POLICIES

• Covers the content of evaluation to the extent these are not fully covered in the ERs and Standards [Discussed later in training.]

OTHER ACCJC DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE SELF EVALUATION PROCESS

• Selected Evaluation Team Responsibilities for Compliance with U.S. Department of Education Regulations (Appendix H in Manual for Institutional Self Evaluation) [Reference with the Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission policies]
The Self Evaluation Report of Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness
(Self Evaluation Report)
PURPOSES OF THE SELF EVALUATION REPORT

- To provide an honest written analysis of the institution’s strengths and weaknesses in meeting Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies based on the institution’s current status, continuous self evaluation, and quality improvement activities

- To be analytical and forward-looking rather than simply descriptive of current status

- To identify areas at the institution that need attention and include them in the Self Evaluation Report

Continued

PURPOSES OF THE SELF EVALUATION REPORT CONTINUED

- To provide the external evaluation team with the necessary facts and institution’s analysis of current conditions of meeting Standards, and for review of the institution’s ability to assure and improve its own quality and effectiveness

- To demonstrate expected levels of institutional performance related to its mission, plans, goals and objectives

- To present appropriate student achievement and learning [results, evaluation of the results, use of results at program level and at institutional levels]
TOP 4 INDICATORS THE SELF EVALUATION HAS GOTTEN OFF TRACK

4. The writers have decided to leave it to the visiting team to ask questions if there are any gaps in narrative/evidence.
3. There are disputes over the facts that remain unresolved.
2. The evidence is a deluge of material; not selected for its value in demonstrating how the college itself assesses/conducts its practice in a particular area.
1. The self evaluation process is not used to reinforce institutional practices as a part of ongoing evaluation.

QUESTION FOR WRITING TEAMS:

How do you handle a gap in institutional practice or in available evidence you identify as you proceed in the self evaluation?

1. What should be done if there is no evidence of the college practice in meeting a particular Standard?
2. What should be done if the self evaluation reveals an area where the college isn't meeting a particular Standard?
THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

FACT OR MYTH?

“We should be safe if we copy those short paragraphs we used before about our compliance with the Eligibility Requirements.”
FACT OR MYTH?

"Have you heard? We don’t even need to write a section on each of the Eligibility Requirements!"

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (ERS)
EVALUATION UNDER NEW STANDARDS

- The first 5 criteria must be separately addressed in the Self Evaluation Report. The others are woven into the institution’s narrative and evidence on the Standards. See Accreditation Reference Handbook

- Compliance with ERs must be continuous and is verified periodically, usually during the external evaluation process.
REMEMBER:

- The ERs are multi-part; each part should be addressed.
- Narrative responses should be supported by the associated evidence.

THE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS
ACCREDITATION STANDARDS:

- State necessary conditions for academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and integrity
- Reflect practices of excellence in higher education
- Apply equally to diverse institutions with varied missions
- Articulate thresholds of performance which must be met or exceeded on a continuous basis

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS DO NOT:

- Include every excellent practice in higher education
- Represent state or system regulations or requirements, and aren’t used to enforce state or system regulations or requirements
- Cover all requirements in federal law and regulations that may pertain to a member institution (financial aid, grants, etc.)
- Represent the "standards" of other groups that promulgate best practices or expectations (such as standards set by professional organizations or by programmatic accreditors.)
2014 Accreditation Standards

Resources available for institutions:

- Accreditation Standards Cross-walked to 2002 standards, with Glossary Terms

- Accreditation Standards annotated with references to Commission policies and to federal regulations  [Expected fall 2014]

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

A. Mission
B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness
C. Institutional Integrity
STANDARD I: MISSION, ACADEMIC QUALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND INTEGRITY

• The mission provides a framework for all institutional goals and activities.
STEPS IN EVALUATION AND PLANNING

- Data Collection
- Analysis
- Goal Setting (driven by college mission)
- Planning
- Resource Allocation and Implementation
- Re-Evaluation

ONGOING INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY REVIEW AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SELF EVALUATION

Mid-Cycle Report Year 3.5

Institutional Evaluation and Planning

Year 1
Year 2
Year 3

Self Evaluation Year 7

Year 4
Year 5
Year 6

AR = ANNUAL REPORT
AFR = ANNUAL FISCAL REPORT
STANDARD I: MISSION, ACADEMIC QUALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND INTEGRITY

- The mission provides a framework for all institutional goals and activities.
- The institution provides the means for students to learn and achieve their goals, assesses how well learning is occurring, and strives to improve learning and achievement through ongoing, systematic, and integrated evaluation and planning.
- The institution demonstrates integrity in its operations and in communications to students and the public.

FACT OR MYTH?

The fact that we continue to exist as a college shows we operate in alignment with our mission.
STANDARD II: STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Instructional Programs
B. Library and Learning Support Services
C. Student Support Services

STANDARD II: STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

• The institution offers instructional programs, library and learning support services, and student support services aligned with its mission.

• The institution assesses its educational quality through methods accepted in higher education, makes the results of its assessments available to the public, and uses the results to improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness.

• The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional programs and student and learning support services offered in the name of the institution.
FACT OR MYTH?

The ACCJC’s “Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness” is no longer valid.

STANDARD III: RESOURCES

A. Human Resources
B. Physical Resources
C. Technology Resources
D. Financial Resources
   - Planning
   - Fiscal Responsibility and Stability
   - Liabilities
   - Contractual Agreements
**STANDARD III: RESOURCES**

- The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its mission and to improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness.

- Accredited colleges organized in multi-college systems ensure that the district/system meets the Standards, and the evaluation of the district's/system's performance is reflected in the accredited status of the institution(s).
FACT OR MYTH?

This portion of the standards is more about operations than it is about student learning and achievement. [Don't we only need the HR/Tech/Facilities and Finance gurus on these sections?]

STANDARD IV: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes
B. Chief Executive Officer
C. Governing Board
D. Multi-College Districts or Systems
STANDARD IV: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- The institution recognizes and uses the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for promoting student success, sustaining academic quality, integrity, fiscal stability, and continuous improvement of the institution.

- Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. In multi-college districts or systems, the roles within the district/system are clearly delineated and allocation of resources is adequate to support and sustain the colleges.

FACT OR MYTH?

If we follow AB 1725, we have no problem with the governance part of the standards.
EVALUATION TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES AS TO SPECIFIED COMMISSION POLICIES AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (USDE) REGULATIONS
[THE CHECKLIST]

USDE REGULATIONS

Evaluation Team Responsibilities for Checking Institutional Compliance with USDE Regulations

- Notification of evaluation visit and third party comment
- Institution-set standards and performance with respect to student achievement
- Credits, program length, and tuition (clock to credit hour conversion)

See Checklist Document

Continued
USDE REGULATIONS

Evaluation Team Responsibilities for Checking Institutional Compliance with USDE Regulations

- Transfer policies
- Distance education and correspondence education
- Student complaints
- Institutional disclosure and advertising, and recruitment materials
- Title IV compliance

FACT OR MYTH?

All these federal regulations add another layer to self evaluation but there was no previous notification to the field.
COMMISSION POLICIES

Evaluation Team Responsibilities for Checking Institutional Compliance with Commission policies

[Note, the policies which must be specifically addressed are also required in the evaluation of compliance with federal regulations.]

See Checklist Document

COMMISSION POLICIES

- Rights and Responsibilities (related to third-party comment)
- Institutional Degrees and Credits
- Distance Education and Correspondence Education
- Representation of Accredited Status
- Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions
- Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status
- Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations
- Institutional Compliance with Title IV

See Checklist Document
FACT OR MYTH?

The list of Commission policies we just reviewed covers all the policies a college needs to know about and follow.

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR EVIDENCE IN THE SELF EVALUATION REPORT
**DATA AND EVIDENCE**

- Data: categorical information that represents qualitative and/or quantitative attributes of variables or a set of variables
- Data and data analysis are both referenced in the report narrative and included as source material in evidence
- Evidence can be selected from every source of information an institution uses to provide verification of a particular action or existing condition
- Evidence can include policies, operational documents, minutes, reports, research and analysis, screen captures from websites, and other sources of information

**DATA IN THE SELF EVALUATION REPORT**

- Is accurate, up-to-date, reliable, and tested for validity and significance
- May be qualitative and/or quantitative presented in data tables, charts and graphs or in documentary form. Analysis is also essential
- Is longitudinal, where appropriate
- Is disaggregated by relevant sub-populations defined by the institution
- Should be made available to the ACCJC and evaluation team in electronic form
DATA ABOUT ENROLLED STUDENTS MUST INCLUDE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- Course completion rates
- Degree/Certificates awarded (numbers or rates)
- Transfer rates to four-year institutions
- For CTE program completers, licensure/certification exam pass rates
- For CTE and other terminating credential completers, job placement data

DATA ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE

- Other measures of student achievement relevant to the institutional mission
- Measures of student achievement relevant to a particular program
- Trend Data over multiple years
**Institution-Set Standards**

The institution must demonstrate that it:

- Establishes standards for its own performance in student achievement/learning
- Analyzes how well it is meeting its own standards
- Makes results available to all constituent groups
- Plans to improve in areas where its own performance is inadequate

Standard I.B.2, 3

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**External Evaluation Teams Will:**

- Identify the institution-set standards of student learning and achievement
- Evaluate the appropriateness of these standards
- Consider these standards in relation to college mission
- Review and describe the data and analyze the college’s performance
- Describe the institution’s overall performance
- Determine whether the college is meeting its standards
DATA ON PROGRAM REVIEW

- Policies on curriculum review and implementation
- Evaluation of student learning outcomes
- Review elements, cycles/timelines, connection and correlation of program review with institutional planning
- Usage of program review data at all levels and across multiple cycles
- Actions taken (improvements) on the basis of program review

DATA ON STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- Student support services program reviews
- Student satisfaction/follow-up surveys
- Records of student use of support services
- Student loan default rates
- Student support services planning documents

Continued
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- Catalog, handbook, web-page descriptions of student services
- Policies on academic progress, honesty, codes of conduct, grievance and complaint procedures
- Availability of student support services to off-campus and to Distance Education/Correspondence Education students

THE TEAM EVALUATES IF THE COLLEGE:

- Gathers data routinely and systematically
- Analyzes and reflects upon it
- Publishes it and shares it widely with constituent groups (for example: research reports, fact books)
- Uses it to plan and implement program improvements
- Uses it to plan and implement institutional improvements
EXAMPLE

- Student Learning Outcomes

What evidence would your institution provide?

EVIDENCE ON STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Course outlines/syllabi with SLOs, catalog descriptions of program level outcomes, examples of assessment methods used (rubrics, portfolios, others), mapping, documented cycle. Institutional, general education, and specialization area outcomes in program outcomes/assessment
- Summary assessment data on SLO attainment
- Information about the level of participation in SLO assessment in all programs of the institution
- Information about how SLOs and results data are made known to students and the public, and how they are used by students
- Evidence of how SLO assessment results are communicated across the college and used for planning, resource allocation, and improvement at the course/program levels as well as at the institutional level

What else would you include?
EXERCISE 1: 
ASSESSING EVIDENCE

LOOKING AT THE PREVIOUS SELF EVALUATION REPORT

RESOURCES FOR DOING AN 
INSTITUTIONAL SELF EVALUATION

WHAT DO YOU HAVE AT YOUR INSTITUTION?
ORGANIZING THE COLLEGE FOR INSTITUTIONAL SELF EVALUATION

THE COLLEGE SHOULD ESTABLISH STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES FOR THE SELF EVALUATION THAT ENSURE

- Evaluation against ERs, Accreditation Standards, and relevant Commission policies
- Evaluation is holistic, integrated, and honest
- Self Evaluation Report uses and is integrated with ongoing research, evaluation, and planning
- Self Evaluation Report leads to institution-wide reflection about quality and student learning
**THE SELF EVALUATION REPORT**

- Summarizes and references evidence to support its analyses, and makes the evidence available electronically to the team and the Commission
- Has coherence and a single voice
- Is a meaningful document for the college, the team, and the Commission
- Leads to institution-wide reflection about quality and student learning

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**FORMAT OF THE SELF EVALUATION REPORT AND SITE VISIT**
FORMAT FOR THE REPORT

- Cover Sheet [Appendix D]
- Certification of the Report [Appendix B]
- Table of Contents
- Introduction (history, demographic information, location of off-site campuses, major developments since the last comprehensive review)
- Organization of the self evaluation process

See Manual for Institutional Self Evaluation

Continued

FORMAT FOR THE REPORT

- Institutional Organization (organizational chart, functional map, list of off-campus sites, DE/CE)
- Eligibility Requirements
- Accreditation Standards:
  - Evidence of Meeting the Standard
  - Analysis and Evaluation (Whether or not, and to what degree does evidence demonstrate that the institution meets each Standard? How has the institution reached this conclusion?)
  - Actionable Improvement Plans (See note next slide)
- Quality Focus Essay [NEW]
FORMAT FOR THE REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL SELF EVALUATION USING THE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

- Compliance with specified Commission policies and federal regulations (see Checklist document)
- Responses to previous recommendations
- [NOTE: Self-identified actionable improvement plans do not have to be included in the SER. However, they should be integrated into planning processes of the institution for implementation and follow-up. And, the institution may still wish to use them as evidence to demonstrate planning processes and results.]

QUALITY FOCUS ESSAY

- The College is asked to discuss, in essay format, two or three areas it has identified for further study, improvement, and to enhance academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and excellence.

- The Midterm Report will be an update on the quality improvement efforts, and an analysis of data (AR/AFR, etc.) related to institutional performance.
QUALITY FOCUS ESSAY

- Related to the Accreditation Standards
- Be realistic, coming out of data and reflected in the self evaluation process and Self Evaluation Report
- 5,000 word limit
- Multi-year, long-term direction(s) for the college
- Commitment to excellence

SUBMISSION OF THE SELF EVALUATION REPORT

60 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF THE VISIT:

- One electronic copy (with evidence) in Microsoft Word to ACCJC plus two printed copies; electronic copies and 2 printed copies of the catalog and schedule of classes.

- One electronic copy (with evidence in electronic format), including catalog and class schedule to each external evaluation team member. Special accommodation may call for print copies to designated team members in limited situations.
THE SITE VISIT

- Pre-visit by team chair prior to visit
- Documents for the team
- Team room and other facilities
- Open meetings
- Availability of key personnel
- Classroom and off-site visits
- Access to distance education
- Exit report

BREAKOUT:
WRITING TEAMS

Facilitating the self evaluation and gathering together the Self Evaluation Report section.
EXERCISE 2: GATHERING EVIDENCE

LOOKING AT THE STANDARDS TO DEVELOP AN EVIDENCE LIST

WITHIN YOUR WRITING TEAM, REVIEW THE IDENTIFIED STANDARD AND DETERMINE

How the college meets the Standard (the structures, policy, practice) by asking:

- What evidence is available
- What is needed and who can assist

Suggested Standards for this activity:

I.A.3; I.B.1; I.C.8; II.A.11; II.B.3; II.C.3; III.A.14; III.B.3; III.C; III.D.3
IV.A.6; IV.B.4; IV.C.7; IV.D.4
**INITIAL WRITING TEAM PREP**

- Read the ERs, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies
- Organize the college community for self-evaluation and reflection
- Use the ACCJC's Manuals, Guides, and other publications
- Read the previous evaluation team and college reports
- Collect and analyze evidence
- Be familiar with the ACCJC website (www.accjc.org)

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OPEN DISCUSSION

• What questions do you have about the standards, about self evaluation, the external evaluation visit or after the visit?

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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