



Southern Connecticut
State University

Preparing for Re-Accreditation: Part II

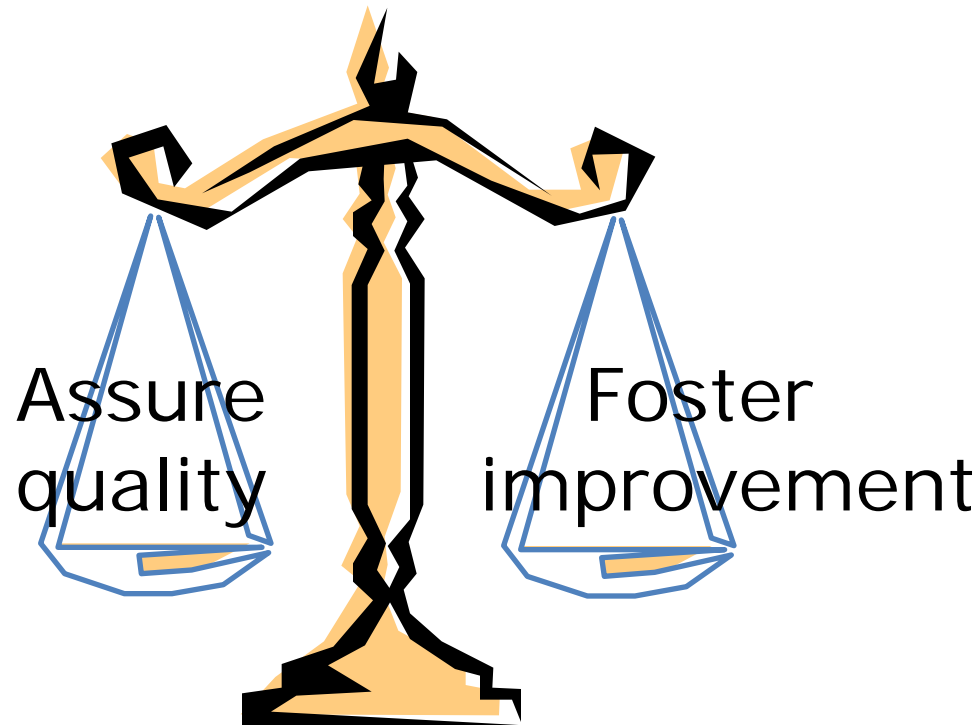
April 8, 2011



Accreditation is

- a status granted to an educational institution or a program that has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality
- voluntary
- non-governmental
- self-regulatory
- institutional or specialized
- “uniquely American”

Dual purposes of accreditation



Accreditation certifies that institution:

- Has appropriate purposes
- Has the resources needed to accomplish its purposes
- Demonstrates that it is accomplishing its purposes
- Has the ability continue to accomplish its purposes

Benefits of accreditation

- Systematic process of self-review
- Expertise of team members
- Become a part of a larger educational community
- Improved decision-making
- Assurance of quality to general public and to students
- Easier transfer of academic credit
- Students qualify for federal financial aid; college qualifies for federal and state grant programs

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

- 246 colleges and universities
- 24 commissioners
- 9 staff members (5 professional; 4 support)
- *hundreds* of volunteers

Standards for accreditation:

- Mission and Purposes
- Planning and Evaluation
- Organization and Governance
- The Academic Program
- Faculty
- Students
- Library and Other Information Resources
- Physical and Technological Resources
- Financial Resources
- Public Disclosure
- Integrity

These standards went into effect on January 1, 2006

Characteristics of the standards

- Mission-centric – institutional autonomy
- Aspirational Standards – to be met at least minimally
- Non-prescriptive - no “musts” or “shoulds”
- Largely qualitative
- Evaluation for improvement
- Responsible innovation can flourish
- Anticipate the future

Self-study process

- 18 months to 2 years
- Steering Committee
- Work groups
- Widespread participation
 - Interviews, surveys, focus groups
 - Existing structures and processes
 - Open meetings
 - Website

Focus Groups

- Cabinet
- Deans' Council
- Chairs' Council
- Faculty Senate
- Administrative Faculty Senate
- SGA
- GSAC
- UCF
- Graduate Council
- IRC
- Student Affairs Directors
- Academic Affairs staff
- Facilities staff (2 shifts)
- Clerical
- Campus police
- DELC
- UG and GR classes

Focus Group Topics

- University mission
- University communication – where do you find information you need?
- Evaluation of PT faculty
- Academic advisement
- Faculty-student research
- Ethics and integrity survey

Faculty and Student Surveys

- Student online surveys (N=987): library, online courses, web site, tech fluency skills
- Faculty online survey (N=190): library, web site, advising, student research
- Paper and online survey (N=1638 – 1249 students; 389 faculty): ethics, integrity

The self-study product

“A holistic and integrated document ... that reflects the totality of one institution.”

- Institutional characteristics
- Introduction (describes self-study process)
- Overview (sets institutional context)
- Narrative
- Data Forms (Data First, Student Success)

Self-study narrative

- About 100 pages
- One chapter for each standard; include areas of emphasis clearly
- All students, all modalities, all locations
- Analytic framework:
 - **Description:** what are we doing?
 - **Appraisal:** how well are we doing?
 - **Projection:** what commitments do we make?

Special emphasis on evidence

Evidence answers the question:

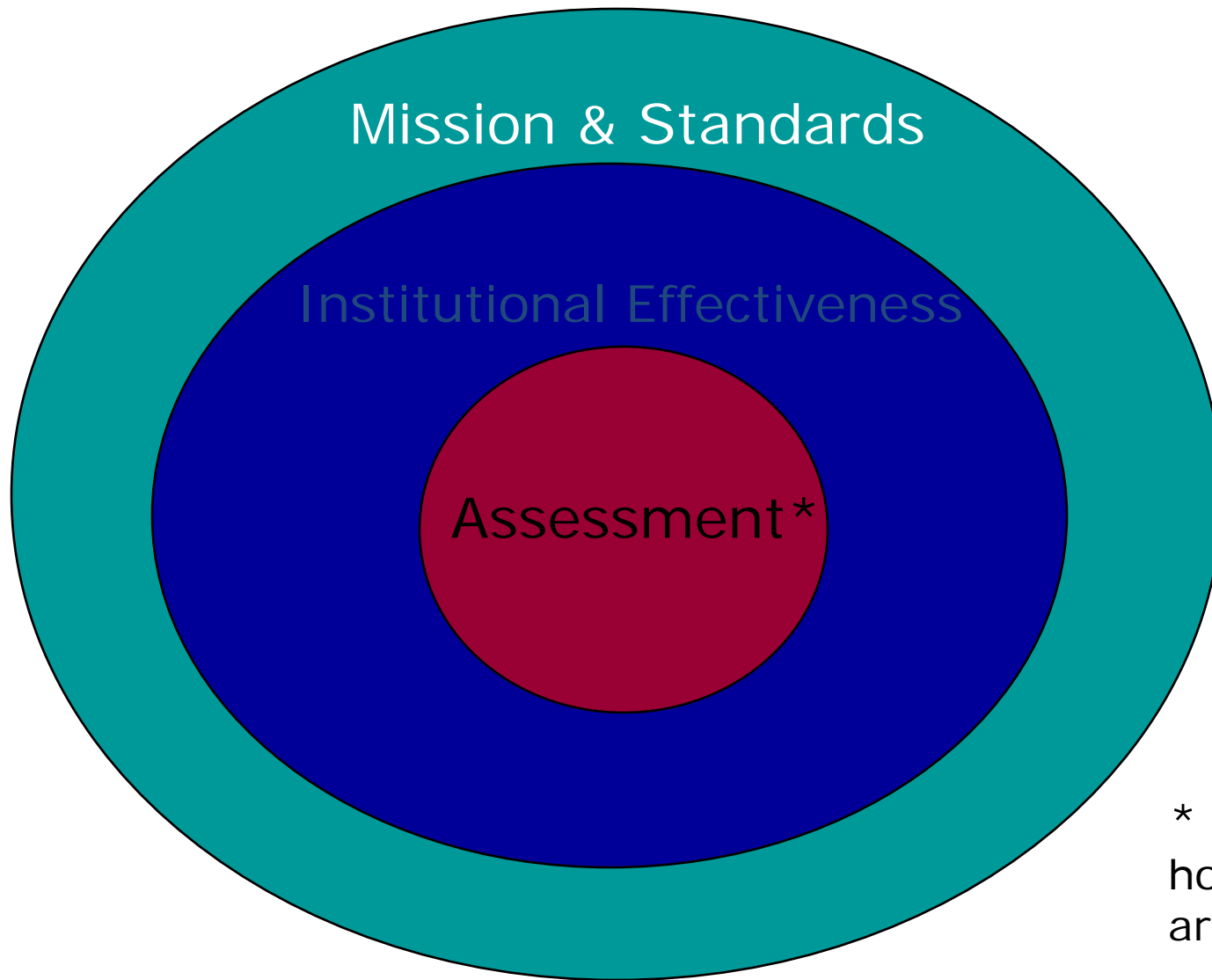
“How do you know?”

Types of evidence: (not an exhaustive list!)

- Enrollment, retention and graduation data
- Publications, institutional work products
- Assessment results, surveys

Good evidence is relevant, verifiable, useful

A special emphasis on assessment and institutional effectiveness



* What and how students are learning

Clearer expectations regarding assessment

- Engagement (“It’s our agenda”)
 - of the college community
 - of the external community
- A thoughtful approach, related to mission
- Evidence (data) on what students know and can do
- Support from administration, faculty leaders
- Use of assessment results for improvement
- Ongoing commitment, integrated into campus culture

A good self-study is...

Candid

Analytical

Concise

Useful

Clear

Participatory

Evidence-based



The site visit

- Sunday afternoon - Wednesday morning
- 8-9 team members, from peer institutions, knowledgeable about the *Standards*
- Visits to off campus locations
- Meetings galore!
- Document room
- Exit report

Site Visitors

- Interact with all groups
- Hold open meetings for campus community
- May ask for additional meetings, interviews
- Develop preliminary report
- Exit meeting – initial report of strengths and concerns

After the visit....

- Team writes a report
- Institution gets to check report for accuracy and respond to report
- Team makes a confidential recommendation to the Commission

Commission action...

- Semester following site visit
- Commission reviews self-study, team report, confidential recommendation, institutional response to Team report
- President and Team Chair attend Commission meeting
- Letter to President

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Standard 1: Mission And Purposes

The institution's mission and purposes are appropriate to higher education, consistent with its charter or other operating authority, and implemented in a manner that complies with the Standards of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The institution's mission gives direction to its activities and provides a basis for the assessment and enhancement of the institution's effectiveness.

Some key points/findings

- BOT approved mission in 2010; Mission distinctiveness within CSUS
- Most faculty know elements of mission and core values; few can “recite”
- Most students unaware; student leaders most knowledgeable
- Departments across campus use mission in setting goals and priorities
- Increase communication and display of mission across campus

Standard 2: Planning And Evaluation

The institution undertakes planning and evaluation appropriate to its needs to accomplish and improve the achievement of its mission and purposes. It identifies its planning and evaluation priorities and pursues them effectively.

Some key points/findings

- Significant progress in integrated planning
- Budgeting tied to strategic plan priorities
- USPaRC and Budget and Planning; guiding principles
- Assessment at institutional, program, and course level
- Academic program review
- Increase assessment across other units

Standard 3: Organization And Governance

The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity. Through its organizational design and governance structure, the institution creates and sustains an environment that encourages teaching, learning, service, scholarship, and where appropriate research and creative activity. It assures provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of each organizational component.

Some key points/findings

- Shared governance highly valued
- Lots of committees
- Significant increase in student leadership capability and involvement in governance
- Uncertainty regarding external organizational structure
- Interim leadership

Standard 4: The Academic Program

The institution's academic programs are consistent with and serve to fulfill its mission and purposes. The institution works systematically and effectively to plan, provide, oversee, evaluate, improve, and assure the academic quality and integrity of its academic programs and the credits and degrees awarded. The institution develops the systematic means to understand how and what students are learning and to use the evidence obtained to improve the academic program.

The Academic Program cont'd

- Undergraduate programs
- General education
- The major or concentration
- Graduate degree programs
- Integrity in the award of academic credit
- Assessment of student learning

Some key points/findings

- New grad programs approved and in process
- Strong curricular oversight by UCF and Grad Council
- Draft academic plan
- Innovative LEP, includes strong FYE and WAC programs
- Significant progress in assessment of student learning
- Challenge to implement LEP and maintain gains made

Standard 5: Faculty

The institution develops a faculty that is suited to the fulfillment of the institution's mission. Faculty qualifications, numbers, and performance are sufficient to accomplish the institution's mission and purposes. Faculty competently offer the institution's academic programs and fulfill those tasks appropriately assigned them.

- Teaching and Advising
- Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity

Some key points/findings

- Talented and committed faculty – “teacher-scholars”
- Increase in support for faculty professional development and research
- Scholarly productivity is high despite workload
- Academic advisement

Standard 6: Students

Consistent with its mission, the institution defines the characteristics of the students it seeks to serve and provides an environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students. It recruits, admits, enrolls, and endeavors to ensure the success of its students, offering the resources and services that provide them the opportunity to achieve the goals of their program as specified in institutional publications. The institution's interactions with students and prospective students are characterized by integrity.

Students cont'd

- Admissions
- Retention and Graduation
- Student Services

Some key points/findings

- Changes in UG admissions process (tiers); streamline GR admissions
- Increase in retention and graduation rates
- Wide array of student services and co-curricular activities; plan for transcripts
- Focus on service learning and civic engagement
- Health and safety
- Increased student voice

Standard 7: Library And Other Information Resources

The institution demonstrates sufficient and appropriate information resources and services and instructional and information technology and utilizes them to support the fulfillment of its mission.

Some key points/findings

- Library – building
- General satisfaction with holdings
- Importance of library instruction for students
- Reorganization of IT
- More education regarding online courses needed
- New course management system in 2012

Standard 8: Physical And Technological Resources

The institution has sufficient and appropriate physical and technological resources necessary for the achievement of its purposes. It manages and maintains these resources in a manner to sustain and enhance the realization of institutional purposes.

Some key points/findings

- Significant construction and renovation over past 10 years
- Improvements in grounds
- School of Business home, library completion, new parking garage, new science building
- Significant improvements to network, high tech classrooms

Standard 9: Financial Resources

The institution's financial resources are sufficient to sustain the achievement of its educational objectives and to further institutional improvement now and in the foreseeable future. The institution demonstrates through verifiable internal and external factors its financial capacity to graduate its entering class. The institution administers its financial resources with integrity.

Some key points/findings

- Have been financially stable
- Transparency in budgeting; guiding principles
- Communication regarding budget – town meetings, dialogues, etc.
- Enrollment Management Council
- Approximately \$16 mil. Endowment
- Budget and staffing challenges

Standard 10: Public Disclosure

In presenting itself to students, prospective students, and other members of the interested public, the institution provides information that is complete, accurate, accessible, clear and sufficient for intended audiences to make informed decisions about the institution.

Some key points/findings

- Variety of print and web publications/ resources
- Transparency
- Communication venues – email, events calendar, etc.
- Web site – main source of information; some have difficulty navigating
- New content management system
- Web vs. portal

Standard 11: Integrity

The institution subscribes to and advocates high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in all of its dealings with students, faculty, staff, its governing board, external agencies and organizations, and the general public. Through its policies and practices, the institution endeavors to exemplify the values it articulates in its mission and related statements.

Some key points/findings

- Institutional commitment to integrity
- Compliance with applicable legal requirements
- Significant improvements in search processes
- Online training for staff and faculty for policies
- DELC; draft Diversity Action Plan
- Plagiarism – academic misconduct policy under review

Accreditation is a

Three part process:

- Self-study
- Site Visit
- Commission action



Our Timeline

- February 2011 – first draft submitted; reviewed by work groups, cabinet, deans
- Spring/summer 2011 – refine self-study
- August 2011 – submit final self-study
- October 16-19, 2011 – site visit
- March or April 2012 – Commission action

How can you be involved?

Read the self-study draft

Provide feedback, suggestions

Participate in open meetings with site team

For more information, feedback, and questions:

SCSU website

www.southernct.edu/neasc

Email us

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CIHE website

<http://cihe.neasc.org/>

Many thanks to

Patricia M. O'Brien SND

Deputy Director

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

New England Association of Schools and Colleges