Principles, Persuasion, and Perspective

NC AIR
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Overview

- Who are you?
- Perspective and process
- Making a persuasive case
- Institutional Effectiveness
- Recent changes to the *POA*
- Quicksand

Who are you?

What is…

- your role on campus?
- your involvement with Accreditation?

- If you could ask just one question….

The Big Picture

It's about student learning and success

Some Higher Education Realities

Mistrust

~~Mistrust~~

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Integrity

Scrutiny

~~Scrutiny~~

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Transparency

Accountability

~~Accountability~~

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Quality

Assuring Quality

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The Process

Comprehensive Decennial Review

- Compliance Certification (Off-Site)
  - May – Track "A"
  - November – Track "B"

- QEP/Focused Report (On-Site)
  - Fall – Track "A"
  - Spring – Track "B"

- Response to On-Site Report (BoT/C&R) – Five months after date of the visit

Fifth-year Interim Review

- Abbreviated compliance certification
  - Standards related to Federal regulations
  - May review "new" off-campus instructional sites

- QEP Impact report

- Concurrent with BoT meetings

- Schools with non-compliant standards "referred" to C&R

Substantive Change

- "Significant"
- Context of increased scrutiny by "external" constituencies
- Policies and procedures

Questions?

Making a Persuasive Case

Think like the reviewer!

Answer the Question(s) Asked

- Most standards have multiple parts
- Supposed to be clear and forthright; don't look for hidden meanings or attempts to "trick" institutions
- Don't provide reviewers with "red herring"

Analyze the Evidence

- Compliance narrative should stand on its own

- Evidence is <u>support</u> for the argument

- Don't ask the reviewer to make the logical links/leaps to be persuaded

Be Persuasive

- Clear, logical narrative
- Clear statement of thesis for each standard
  o Compliance
  o Non-Compliance
  o Partial Compliance
- Linear argument
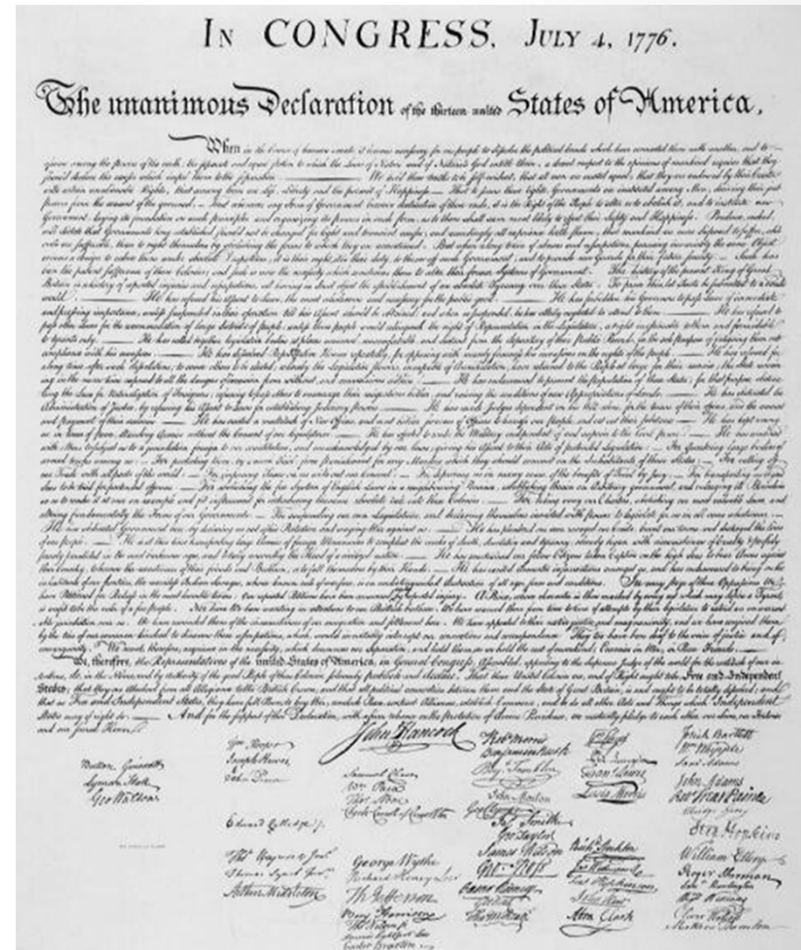
Avoid Defensiveness/Special Pleading

- Still a "self-study," with goal to improve
- Responsibility with the institution to make the case for compliance, not the reviewer
- Murphy's Law applies
- Each step in the process allows further and more focused conversation

Questions?

Institutional Effectiveness

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Educational Programs

Support Services

Research and Community Service

Foundational Assumptions

- Purpose of assessment is institutional improvement
- Changing the learning environment will improve student learning (A. Astin: I-E-O)
- Educational Program is unit that offers best combination of coherence, longitude, and flexibility
- Assessment is learner-centered; Student Learning Outcomes
  - Verbs describe student behavior
  - Demonstrate knowledge, action, thinking
- Reasoned judgment – exercised by professionals and carefully documented – is important to the process

Measure student behavior

Change instructional/institutional behavior

Lose the "Loop"

Linear

Implement proposed improvement

Gather and analyze data

Evaluate success

Recursive

Re-Evaluate action plan

Implement/continue
proposed improvement

Gather and analyzed data

Evaluate success

Some Realities

- Can't control "inputs" most of the time
  - Preparation for learning
  - Commitment to/participation in own learning

- Assessment process often trial and error
  - Can't always prove cause and effect
  - Often relying on professional judgment based on experience
  - Sometimes feels more like "art" than "science"

- Course grades usually don't provide actionable data

- Murphy's law: no one has extra "free" time

Sustained Effort

- Results, not just process
  - o Structure, rubrics, etc. = tools
  - o Results = "program" improvement
- Course-level may be important, but decisions occur at program- and/or unit-level
- Process focused on success of institutional actors; student success should benefit from our improvements
- "Action" is usually change in curriculum or pedagogy

Failure to Launch

- Conversation constantly returns to process and assessment instruments
- "No further action required"
- Program survival, rather than program improvement
- It's all about statistics
- Lake Woebegone syndrome
- No one can describe a successful student
- Just ignore it, and it'll go away....

SACSCOC Effectiveness Standards

- CR 2.5 (Institutional Effectiveness)
- CS 3.3.1.1 (Educational programs)
- CS 3.3.1.2 (Administrative support)
- CS 3.3.1.3 (Academic and student support)
- CS 3.3.1.4 (Research)
- CS 3.3.1.5 (Community/public service)
- FR 4.1 (Student achievement)

CS 3.3.1 (Institutional Effectiveness)

- Appropriate use of student learning outcomes (3.3.1.1, 3.3.1.3)
- Appropriate and authentic assessments
- Carefully analyzed data
- Evidence of conversations where data analysis is subject to professional judgment
- Actions designed to improve programs and units
- Clear and cogent narratives that argue compliance persuasively
- Emphasis on improvement, not process

Effective Program Effectiveness

- What would "success" look like?
  - Program
  - Student

- What data would be appropriate and useful?

- What structures for analysis and reporting would be useful and sustainable?

Questions?

Change is Constant

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*Principles of Accreditation 2012
Revision
Transition*

Core Requirements

- **CR 2.7.3** (General Education) – also reviewed On-Site
- **CR 2.8** (Faculty): "...to ensure the quality and integrity of <u>each of</u> its academic programs"
- **CR 2.10** (Student Support Services): "...consistent with its mission that <u>are intended to</u> promote student learning...."

Comprehensive Standards

- **CS 3.2.9** (<u>Personnel</u> appointment): "…employment, <u>and evaluation of all personnel</u>…."
- **CS 3.2.10** (Administrator evaluations): "…institution <u>periodically</u> evaluates…."
- **CS 3.2.13** (Institution-related entities): includes language from previous CS 3.2.2.4
- **CS 3.3.1.3** (<u>academic and student</u> support services)
- **CS 3.3.1.4/5**: remove "educational"
- **CS 3.5.1** (<u>General education</u> competencies): "…the extent to which <u>students</u> have attained them."

Comprehensive Standards

- **CS 3.5.4** (Terminal degrees of faculty): "At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours…faculty members holding <u>an appropriate</u> terminal degree – usually the earned doctorate – ~~in the discipline~~ or the equivalent of the terminal degree"

- **CS 3.6.3** (Institutional credits for a graduate degree): "<u>At least one-third</u> of credits…."; delete "The majority." (aligns with policy on collaborative academic arrangements)

- **CS 3.9.3** (Qualified staff): <u>"The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff – with appropriate education or experience in the student affairs area – to accomplish the mission of the institution."</u>

Comprehensive Standards

- ~~CS 3.10.2 (Submission of financial statements)~~; renumber the following standards in CS 3.10.x
- **CS 3.13.x** (Policy compliance)
  - Accrediting decisions of other agencies
  - Collaborative academic arrangements
  - Complaint procedures against the Commission or its accredited institutions
  - Reaffirmation of Accreditation and subsequent reports
    - Distance learning
    - System or corporate structure
    - Branch/parent relationship
    - Location in region
    - Separately accredited unit

Federal Requirements

- **FR 4.1** (Student achievement)
- **FR 4.7** (Title IV Program Responsibilities)
- **FR 4.8** (Distance or correspondence education)
  - 4.8.1 – demonstrate that the student receiving the credit is the one registered
  - 4.8.2 – written procedure to protect privacy of students enrolled in such programs
  - 4.8.3 – written procedure – distributed at the time of registration/enrollment – that notifies students of any projected charges associated with verification of student identity
- **FR 4.9** (Definition of credit hours); policies and procedures "<u>that conform to commonly accepted practice in higher education and Commission policy.</u>"

Transition

- Effective immediately (Federal requirements already in effect; policy now standard)
- CS 3.13.x policy compliance issues were supposed to be addressed by institutions currently in reaffirmation process in November Off-Site process; will be evaluated by On-Site Committees
- New/revised standards reviewed by On-Site Committees (including substantive change committees, if applicable)
- Institutions have option of incorporating changes into Focused Report narrative (with the standard) or providing an addendum
- SACSCOC BoT will apply revised standards in reviews of reaffirmation and monitoring reports beginning June 2012; institutions should respond to the language of the previous committee or Board action

Questions?

Quicksand

Institutional Effectiveness

- Functional, sustainable foundation of planning, assessment and improvement (CR 2.5) – strategic and operational
- Ongoing cycles of outcomes assessment, analysis, and improvement (CS 3.3.1.x)
- Culture of evidence

General Education

- Substantial, broad, and coherent (CR 2.7.3)
- Competencies are identified and defined; data presented to demonstrate the extent of student attainment (CS 3.5.1)

Faculty

- Adequate FT faculty for quality and integrity of each program (CR 2.8)
- All faculty are qualified (CS 3.7.1)
- All faculty are evaluated (CS 3.7.2)

Financial/Physical Resources

- Sound financial base and demonstrated stability – audited numbers (CR 2.11.1)
- Recent financial stability (CS 3.10.1)
- Appropriate financial control (CS 3.10.3)
- Appropriate control over physical resources (CS 3.11.1)

Educational Programs

- Published policies include criteria for academic credit (CS 3.4.4)
- Sound and acceptable practices for determining amount and level of credit (CS 3.4.5; FR 4.9)
- Academically qualified program coordinators (CS 3.4.11)
- Graduate program progressively more advanced than undergraduate (CS 3.6.1)
- Direct instruction by the institution (CS 3.5.2; CS 3.6.3)

Human Resources

- Qualified administrative and academic officers (CS 3.2.8)
- Evaluation of all personnel (CS 3.2.9)
- Qualified professional staff (CS 3.8.3; CS 3.9.3)

Written Student Complaints

- Policy
- Procedures
- Documented examples of following published policy and procedures
- Log(s) to be reviewed by On-Site Committees

Substantive Change

- Policy to ensure timely reporting and approval from SACSCOC
- Evidence of compliance

Questions?