

Preparing for Institutional Self Study

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**Accrediting Commission for
Community and Junior Colleges**

What we will cover today

Accreditation and the ACCJC/WASC

The 2002 Standards of Accreditation

The requirements for evidence in the Self Study

The Themes in the 2002 Standards

Organizing the college community for self study

Resources for doing a self study

Special Commission concerns and related
policies

Format of the Self Study Report and the Site
Visit

ACCJC Documents to support the Self Study

- *Guide to Evaluating Institutions*
- *Self Study Manual*
- *Accreditation Reference Handbook*
- *Distance Learning Manual*
- *C-RAC Guide for Institutions and Evaluators*
- *C-RAC Student Learning: Principles for Good Practices*

Accreditation and the ACCJC/WASC

The Purposes of Accreditation are:

- To provide assurance to the public that education provided by institutions meets acceptable levels of quality
- To promote continuous institutional improvement
- To raise the quality of higher educational institutions in the region/nation

ACCJC encourages and supports institutional development through:

- Establishing standards of quality based upon excellent practices in higher education
- Evaluating institutions with these standards using a three-part process that entails
 - Institutional Self Study
 - Peer Review
 - Commission Review

Commission Actions on Institutions

- The Commission determines the accredited status of a member institution.
- The Commission communicates the accreditation decision to the institution.
- The Commission communicates the accreditation decision to the public.

The Standards of Accreditation

Standards of Accreditation:

- Are necessary conditions for high - quality education
- Reflect best practice in higher education, not common practice
- Apply to diverse institutions

Standards are not:

- Inclusive of *every* good practice in higher education
- Representative of state or system regulations or requirements or used to enforce those regulations or requirements
- Meant to represent the “standards” of other groups that purport to establish best practice or quality

The ACCJC Standards

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

Standard III: Resources

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

A. Mission – *The institution:*

- Defines its purpose
- Defines its intended population
- Defines its commitment to student learning

continued...

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness – *The institution:*

- Provides evidence it collects and uses student achievement and student learning outcomes data
- Provides evidence it conducts program review and other ongoing, systematic evaluation
- Provides evidence it uses systematic assessment and planning to improve educational effectiveness and institutional quality

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

A. Instructional Programs – *The institution:*

- Offers high quality instructional programs wherever and however they are offered
- Identifies student learning outcomes and evaluates how well students are learning
- Assesses student achievement
- Assesses programs systematically
- Assures quality and improvement of all programs including distance and off campus

B. Student Support Services – *The institution:*

- Researches and identifies the learning support needs of its students
- Provides appropriate, comprehensive learning support services to its students regardless of location or delivery method
- Provides precise and accurate information about the institution to students and the public

continued...

B. Student Support Services: *continued*

- Assesses the quality of those services by evaluating student achievement and student learning outcomes as appropriate
- Uses the results of evaluation to plan and implement improvements to student support services

C. Library and Learning Support Services – *The institution:*

- Offers sufficient services to support the quality of its instructional programs
- Includes library, tutoring, technology and other learning support services
- Trains students and staff to use these services
- Assesses services systematically using SLOs as appropriate
- Assures quality and improvement of services

Standard III: Resources

A. Human resources – *The institution:*

- Employs qualified personnel
- Evaluates all personnel
- Ensures professional development of personnel
- Assesses its performance in employment equity and diversity
- Uses human resources to support student learning
- Integrates human resource planning with institutional planning

B. Physical Resources – *The institution:*

- Provides safe and sufficient facilities and equipment
- Evaluates the quality of its physical resources on a regular basis
- Ensures physical resources support student learning
- Integrates physical resource planning with institutional planning

C. Technology Resources – *The institution:*

- Ensures its technology supports facilities, research and college-wide communication
- Provides training to students and personnel in the use of technology
- Ensures that technology supports student learning programs and services
- Integrates technology planning with institutional planning

D. Financial Resources – *The institution:*

- Ensures fiscal stability and integrity
- Plans for short-term and long-term financial needs
- Ensures that financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness
- Integrates financial planning with institutional planning

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes – *The institution:*

- Uses ethical and effective leadership that enables it to identify values, set and achieve goals, learn, and improve
- Provides for staff, faculty, administrator, and student involvement in governance
- Establishes and evaluates the effectiveness of governance structures and processes
- Ensures that governance supports student learning and improves institutional effectiveness

B. Board and Administrative Organization – *The institution:*

- Has an independent governing board that sets policy, assures quality and integrity of student learning programs and services and financial stability
- Has a chief administrator that provides leadership for institutional quality and improvement
- Has clearly defined and effective lines of authority and responsibility between colleges and the district/system in a multi-college system.
- Ensures that board and administrative organization supports student learning and improves institutional effectiveness

The Requirements for Evidence in the Self Study

Data in the Self Study should be:
(see *Guide to Evaluating Institutions* for samples)

- Qualitative or quantitative presented in data tables, charts and graphs or documentary form with analyses
- Longitudinal, where appropriate, with analyses

Continued

Data about the institution's service area
(related to mission) should include:

- labor market information
- demographic information
- socio-economic information

Continued

Data about incoming students should include:

- information about student educational goals (programs)
- information about student educational goals (courses, certificates, degrees, transfer, jobs, etc.)
- information about student readiness for college/needs for remedial instruction

Continued

Data about enrolled students should include:

(See Guide to Evaluating Institutions pp 10-11)

- PT/FT enrollments
- student demographics
- student educational goals (courses, certificates, transfer, degrees, jobs, etc.)
- student enrollment across the range of instructional programs.

Continued

Data about enrolled students must include *Student Achievement*:

- course completion data
- retention term to term
- progression to next course/level
- program completion
- degree/certificate completion
- transfer rates to four-year institutions
- scores on licensure exams
- job placement/post training

Data on *Student Achievement* can also include:

- average grades awarded
- alumni survey responses
- employer survey results
- course outlines containing evaluation methods for course objectives
- SCANS skills assessment results
- Common course examination results
- English, math, and ESL placement results

Data on *Program Review* should include:

- institutional program review data including longitudinal data
- course outlines/syllabi showing intended learning outcomes and evaluation methods
- catalogues showing program goals and learning outcomes
- budgets showing adequate resources
- policies on curricular review
- evidence of regular course review and improvement

Data on *Student Learning Outcomes* should include:

- catalogue and institutional descriptions of programs with related SLOs
- course outlines/syllabi with stated SLOs
- portfolios, productions, and samples of student work
- grading rubrics where they exist
- summary data on SLO attainment
- evidence that SLO data is used for institutional self-evaluation, planning, and improvement of teaching and learning

Data on *Student Services* should include:

- student services program reviews
- student satisfaction or follow-up surveys
- records of student use of services
- student services planning documents
- catalogue, handbook, web-page descriptions of student services
- policies on academic progress, honesty, codes of conduct, grievance and complaint procedures
- availability of services (off-campus and DL)

In using evidence, the college should:

- Gather it routinely and systematically
- Analyze and reflect upon it
- Publish it and share it widely within the college (research reports, fact books)
- Use it to plan and implement program improvements
- Use it to plan and implement institutional improvements

Finding Evidence: An Exercise

Themes in the Standards

Six themes integrate the standards:

See Self Study Manual pp 5-6

- Dialogue
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Institutional Commitments
- Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement
- Organization
- Institutional Integrity

Using the Themes in the Self Study Report

- Themes can be used to conduct and present a summative evaluation of institutional quality
 - Institutions are advised to use Themes to develop an executive summary at the beginning or end of the Self Study Report, *or*
 - At beginning of the report, Themes can be used as a tool to summarize the state of the college as assessed by self study (“Where are we now”); at end of the report, use Themes to summarize college directions for the future (“Where we are going”).

1. Dialogue

The institution should:

- Engage in inclusive, informed, and intentional dialogue about institutional quality and improvement

1. Ensure participation in reflection and exchange by as many members of the college community as is feasible

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2. Base dialogue on reliable information about the college's programs and services and evidence on how well the institution is meeting student needs
 3. Employ quantitative and qualitative information that is responsive to a clear inquiry, meaningfully interpreted, and broadly communicated
- Expect ongoing self-reflection and conscious improvement as a result

2. Student Learning Outcomes

The institution should:

- Identify intended SLOs at the course, program, and degree levels
- Inform students of intended SLOs
- Evaluate the actual student learning outcomes
- Demonstrate that evaluations are used to improve learning and teaching

What are Student Learning Outcomes?

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities
- Understanding

SLOs are defined in the context of each college's mission, populations and programs, as well as the values of “higher education.”

For some institutions, Student Learning Outcomes may include

- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Opinions
- Values

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3. Institutional Commitments

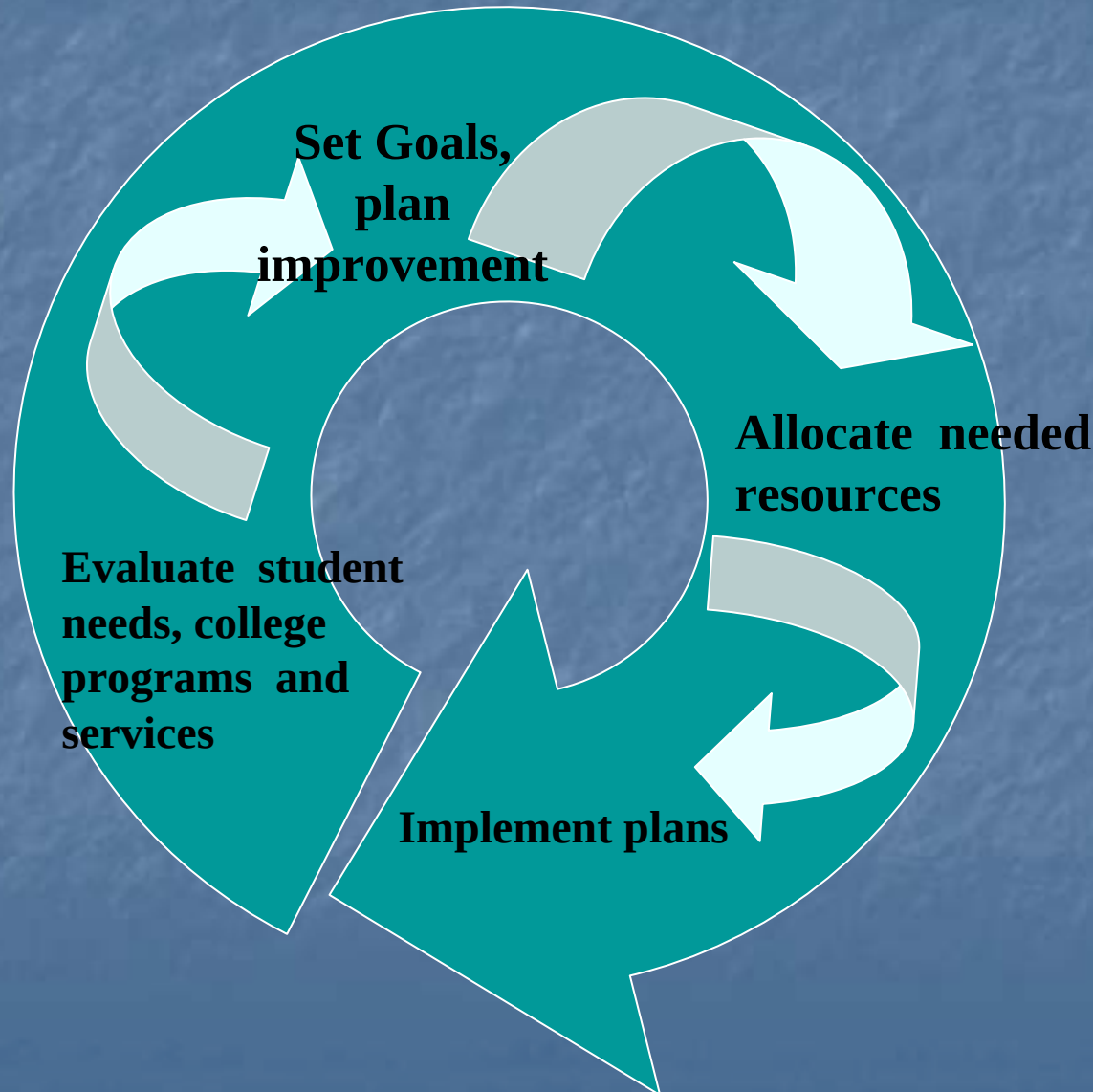
Commitment of the whole institution to:

- Delivery of high quality education congruent with mission and responsive to student needs
- Student learning as primary mission
- Periodic review of mission statement
- A culture and practice of continuous quality improvement

4. Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement

- Accreditation processes emphasize the importance of evaluation and improvement as established practice
- Institutions should establish continuous, ongoing processes for rigorous evaluation of institutional quality and educational effectiveness
- Institutions cannot actively change what they do not measure
- Good evaluation is critical to support improvement

Cyclical Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement



5. Organization

The institution:

- Has adequate staff, resources and organizational, communication and decision-making structures to produce and support student learning
- Has in place the organizational means to identify and make public the learning outcomes, to evaluate the effectiveness of programs in producing those outcomes, and to make improvements

6. Institutional Integrity

The institution demonstrates:

- Honesty and truthfulness in the manner in which it represents itself to all stakeholders, internal and external, including the Commission
- Integrity of its policies, practices, and procedures
- Regard for issues of equity and diversity in the manner in which it treats students, employees, and its publics
- Clarity, understandability, accessibility, and appropriateness of publications
- Academic freedom
- Integrity in its determination of grades and credits

Organizing the College Community for Self Study

In order to achieve an accurate Self Study Report institutions should seek

Broad participation
from:

- Faculty
- Administrators
- Support Staff
- Students

Leadership from:

- Faculty
- Support Staff
- IR Staff
- Administrators
- CEO/College President
- Board

The college should establish structures and processes for the self study that ensure:

- The college evaluates itself against each standard and eligibility requirement
- The college's evaluation is holistic, integrated (themes in the standards), and honest
- The self study report uses and is integrated with ongoing research, evaluation and planning
- The self study report leads to institution-wide reflection about quality and student learning

Continued

The college should establish structures and processes for the self study that ensure:

- The report summarizes and references evidence to support its analyses
- The report has coherence and a single voice
- The report is a meaningful document for the college, the team, and the Commission

Resources for Doing a Self Study

Institutional Reports

- Previous Accreditation Reports:
 - Self Study, Midterm, Annual, Annual Fiscal, Progress, and Substantive Change Reports
 - Team Report(s)
 - Commission Action Letters
- Institutional Plans
 - Education
 - Facilities
 - Financial
 - Technology
 - Human Resources

continued

Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness

This rubric measures the following characteristics of institutional effectiveness and evaluates each to determine the level of institutional implementation (Awareness, Development, Proficiency, or Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement).

Program Review

Planning

Student Learning Outcomes

Institutional data and analyses

- Program reviews
- Assessment reports
- Student learning outcome data
- Student achievement data
- Environmental scans, market studies
- Demographic studies

continued

Human Resources

- Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO)
- Editor(s)
- Institutional Research Staff
- College President
- Tech Support Staff

Technology Resources

Internet/intranet for:

- Communication about the self study process
- Sharing results of assessment
- Publishing draft analyses/reports for comment
- Providing access to data (internal and external)
- Presenting data, analyses and plans to the college or to the team

Technology resources for the team to use in their work.

*Special Commission
Concerns and Related
Commission Policies*

Commission Policies*

- Policy on Distance Learning
- Policy Statement on Diversity
- Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs
- Policy on Transfer and Award of Credit (2 policies)

Continued

**See Accreditation Reference Handbook*

Commission Policies*

Continued

- Contractual Relationships with Non-regionally accredited Institutions
- Substantive Change Policy
- Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems
- Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions

**See Accreditation Reference Handbook*

Format of the Self Study Report, and The Site Visit

Format for the Self Study Report

See *Self Study Manual* page 9

- Certification of the Self Study Report
- Eligibility Requirements
- Responses to prior team recommendations
- Descriptive Summary
- Self Evaluation (citing the standards in the text) and resulting in...
- Planning Agenda (for institutional improvement with references to institutional plans)

The Site Visit

See Self Study Manual pp 14-15

- Pre-visit by team chair
- Electronic and hard-copy documents for the team
- Team room and other facilities
- Availability of key personnel
- Classroom and off-site visits
- Access to distance education
- Exit report

After the visit

See *Self Study Manual* p 16

- Draft team chair report and correction of errors of fact
- Confidential team recommendation to the Commission
- Commission action and action letters from the Commission
- Institutional follow-up

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