

THE ROLE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS IN THE INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION PROCESS

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TODAY'S AGENDA

- **Overview of the Accreditation Process**
- **Student Affairs role**
- **Practical application on your campus**

Intended Outcomes

Upon completion of this session, participants will:

- ▶ have a better understanding of the higher education accreditation process**
- ▶ be more knowledgeable about ways student affairs can contribute to supporting the institution during the accreditation process**
- ▶ Be able to identify at least three things they can do on their campus to prepare for accreditation review**

What is accreditation?

According to the ACPA publication, *Accreditation and the Role of the Student Affairs Educator*:

- ❖ “A method of providing public notification that an institution of higher education has **complied with established standards** of program quality and effectiveness set forth by appropriate regional accrediting agencies.”
- ❖ “A commitment to the **self-study and external peer-review** processes seeking not only validation for achieving the standards but also continual ways to improve the quality of education and services provided to students.”

According to the Council for Higher Education Accreditation:

- ❖ “The process created to ensure **quality control and quality assurance** by conducting a critical **self-assessment** followed by **and external peer review**”

What is accreditation?

- ▶ **CHEA – Council for Higher Education Accreditation**
 - ▶ **Middle State Association**
 - ▶ **New England Association**
 - ▶ **Higher Learning Commission (formerly North Central Association)**
 - ▶ **Northwest Commission**
 - ▶ **Southern Association**
 - ▶ **Western Association**
 - ▶ **AACSB International (The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)**
 - ▶ **The Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs**

- ▶ **Can vary slightly, but basics are the same**

- ▶ **WV institutions are covered by *Higher Learning Commission (HLC)***

Steps in an Accreditation process

1. **Self-Study** - Prior to peer review, a self-study is produced by the institution to identify strengths, weaknesses, improvement opportunities, ongoing improvement, and to provide evidence that the institution meets the set accreditation criteria
2. **Peer Review and Site Visit** - Visiting team of peer reviewers conduct formal meetings open forums, and informal conversations with faculty, staff, students, administration, and alumni
3. **Decision** - Visiting team completes a report on findings and makes recommendations to HLC for final decision on accreditation / reaffirmation
4. **Periodic Reviews** - Any follow-up visits or reports or clarifications needed are identified and a schedule is put into place

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and Accreditation

Five Criteria:

- 1) **Criterion 1 – Mission**
- 2) **Criterion 2 – Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**
- 3) **Criterion 3 – Teaching and Learning: Resources & Support**
- 4) **Criterion 4 – Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement**
- 5) **Criterion 5 – Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness**



HOW TO PREPARE

Create “Accreditation File Drawer” for hard copies of documents

- ◆ **File 1 – Criterion One. Mission.**

- ◆ **Folder 1a – Mission, Vision, Values, Pillars, Motto, Philosophy, Aspirations**

- ◆ **Folder 1b - Strategic Plan**

- ◆ **Folder 1c - Assessment Plan**

- ◆ **File 2 – Criterion Two. Integrity**

- ◆ **Folder 2a - Confidentiality form**

- ◆ **Folder 2b - Ethics code**

- ◆ **Folder 2c - Employee onboarding outline which should show these are included in training**

HOW TO PREPARE

- ◆ **File 3 – Criterion Three. Teaching & Learning: Resources & Support.**
 - ◆ **Folder 3a – Resumes** of any Student Affairs staff that teach classes, workshops, trainings, or deliver co-curricular events and activities
 - ◆ **Folder 3b – Documentation of Professional Development:** list/program of conferences, workshops, trainings attended by which staff
 - ◆ **Folder 3c – Documentation of program collaborations with faculty** (ad, flyer, outline)
 - ◆ **Folder 3d – Documentation of support programs/services**
 - ◆ **Folder 3e – Documentation of Community Engagement / Service Learning programs**

HOW TO PREPARE

- ◆ **File 4 – Criterion Four. Teaching & Learning: Evaluation & Improvement**
 - ◆ Folder 4a – **Assessment plans** (must include learning outcomes)
 - ◆ Folder 4b – **Assessment Results**
 - ◆ Folder 4c – **Use of Assessment Results**
- ◆ **File 5 – Criterion Five. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness**
 - ◆ Folder 5a – Job descriptions and resumes of staff
 - ◆ Folder 5b – **Documented Evidence of Performance**
(data collection, assessment results, use of results)

HOW TO PREPARE

- ◆ **Link Institution & SA Mission Statement to Student Affairs webpages** (Must be easily found)
- ◆ **Display Institution & SA Mission Statements in offices**
- ◆ **All Units must have mission statements and strategic plans**
- ◆ **Link Institution & SA Strategic Plans to Student Affairs webpages**

HOW TO PREPARE

- **Be familiar with your institution's vision, mission, goals, pillars, values, motto, etc.**
- **Know the Student Affairs mission, vision, values, motto, etc... as well as your own unit's mission, goals, etc.**
- **Make sure staff is aware of the visit and informed on details**
- **Every staff member needs to be aware of her/his role in retention of students**



WHAT TO EXPECT DURING VISIT

- ◆ **There will be formal and informal meetings (i.e., random or scheduled)**
- ◆ **You would be informed if you are scheduled for a formal meeting.**
- ◆ **All staff, including student workers and graduate assistants, should be prepared for random meetings/drop-ins throughout the visit**
- ◆ **The team can/may decide to tour facilities or meet with staff in any unit.**

SUGGESTIONS

- ◆ **Use template for Strategic Plan AND Assessment Plans**
- ◆ **Integrate into daily/yearly training, reporting, planning, etc.**
- ◆ **Take time once a year to organize your accreditation files and double check your webpages**
- ◆ **Include what you can in annual reports**
- ◆ **Keep organization charts up-to-date and available**
- ◆ **Accreditation files should be kept for 10 years from reaffirmation to reaffirmation reviews**



SUGGESTIONS



COMMENTS



QUESTIONS

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ACCREDITATION

Resources

- **Accreditation and the Role of the Student Affairs Educator**

<http://www.myacpa.org/accreditation-and-role-student-affairs-educator>

- **Council for Higher Education Accreditation**

<http://www.chea.org/>

- **Higher Learning Commission**

<http://www.hlcommission.org>

- **Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners**

http://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/ACPA_NASPA_Professional_Competencies_FINAL.pdf

Resources

- **CAS Standards-professional standards for 43 higher ed function areas. Also includes self-assessment guides.**

<http://www.cas.edu/>

- **WVU 2014 Accreditation**

<http://accreditation.wvu.edu/>

- **Online Guide to Accredited Colleges & Universities**

<http://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/accreditation/>

- **Other university websites**

- **<http://sa.uncg.edu/assessment/assessment-resources/student-learning-outcomes/>**
- **<http://sites.jcu.edu/vpsa-assessment/pages/about/>**
- **<http://cssl.osu.edu/>**