Accreditation Process Change: Developing a Holistic Approach

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Commissioner, MSCHE
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Welcome!

Order of today’s Town Hall Meeting

• Presentation on the developing new process.

• Listening session: questions and comments.
Today’s Presentation

• History leading to the Process Change initiative.

• Membership endorsement of overall structure.

• Developments since initial endorsement.
A brief history of how we got here.

- Multi-step process of renewing accreditation activities.
  - Similar to what we expect of member institutions.
  - Responding to changing higher education realities.
    * Regulatory climate
    * Growing expectations of students and their families
    * Increasing accountability to taxpayers
    * Overburdened resources of our member institutions
Step 1: The Assessment Taskforce

• Began September of 2012

• Reconsidered Standards 7 and 14
  – Laid the groundwork for rewriting the standards.
Step 2: Revision of the Standards

• Reconsidered the standards described in *Characteristics of Excellence*

• Resulted in new standards adopted in 2014.
Step 3: Collaborative Implementation Process

- Pilot implementation of new standards.
  - Collaboration among 15 institutions and MSCHE Staff.
  - Began in 2014.
  - Leading to full implementation in 2017-2018.

- Informing development of the new process.
Step 4: Process Change

• Development of basic structure.
  – Eight year cycle
  – Annual institutional updates (AIUs)
  – Mid-point peer review of AIUs (no PRR)
  – Self-Study punctuates the cycle

• Endorsed by membership, January 2016.
  – Second membership vote to be held when details are complete.
What we promised

• The Commission promised to next fill in the details of this process **within** the endorsed framework.

• Work Groups were established to accomplish this task.
Seating the Process Change Committee

• Steering Committee leading 3 Work Groups
  – Financial Sustainability
  – “Student Achievement"
  – Self-Study and Team Visit

• Included 36 participants from member institutions

• Directly supported by MSCHE Staff
Work Groups’ goals?

• Recommendations leading to consistent interpretation and application of the Standards that:
  – Enable the Commission to take unassailable actions;
  – Support continuous institutional improvement;
  – Are respectful of the resources expended by member institutions;
  – Meet expanding Federal requirements.
How we worked

• A two-day working session of the entire committee, April 7 & 8, 2016

• A one-day working session of the Steering Committee, May 24, 2016

• Many telephone, conference call and email exchanges were held among various members.
Work Group Recommendations

• Presented to the Commission
  – Productive discussion ensued
  – Recommendations were made
  – Commission endorsed current path

• More development by Chair and Staff
  – Incorporating Commissioners’ input
  – Resulting in today’s discussion
The New Process

**Annual Institutional Updates**
- Financial and Student Achievement data elements
- Responses to recommendations (if needed)

**Midpoint Review**
- Cumulative Peer Review of AIU data
- Feedback from the Commission

**Self-Study Evaluation**
- Campus engagement in self-study process that culminates with an onsite team visit by peer evaluators

Opportunities/Input for Institutional Improvement
Annual Institutional Update

- Financial and Student Achievement data elements
- Responses to recommendations (if needed)

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Opportunities/Input for Institutional Improvement
Annual Institutional Update: Goals

• Provide information on institution’s general health.
  – Service to students/constituents
  – Financial Sustainability

• Metrics must be useful and used

• Must not be overly burdensome for institution

• Must meet Federal requirements
  – Enabling effective response to increased scrutiny
But. . . don’t we already do this?

• In a way, yes.

• The Institutional Profile was updated annually
  – Was not fully utilized

• The Annual Institutional Update will result in useful feedback to institutions
  – Increased utility for the institution’s effort
Annual Institutional Update: Metrics

- Metrics are **still under development**
  - Will incorporate information gained from Town Hall Meetings

- Loosely divided into two categories:
  - “Student Achievement” Metrics
  - Financial Sustainability Metrics
AIU Metrics: “Student Achievement”

• Academic Progress Metrics
  – Currently three data elements measuring academic progress
  – Seven optional data elements to provide context

• Post-Institutional Metrics
  – Currently two data elements measuring post-institutional success
  – Four optional data elements to provide context
AIU Metrics: Financial Sustainability

• **Currently** thirteen data elements
  – Some may not apply to all institutions

• **Currently** seven document uploads
  – Some may not apply to all institutions
AIU Data Sources

• Most data elements are currently required in other reports.
  – Optional elements enable context current Federal reports lack
  – Some data elements may be uploaded to AIU from available online sources
  – Others will be easily uploaded by institutions via MSCHE portal
AIU Data Sources

• Balance question for your consideration:

Do you value the availability of current data in the AIU over the simplicity of slightly older data uploaded from IPEDS?

– Current data would require institution upload, IPEDS data may not.

– Compromise may be blend of two sources.

Let’s look at proposed upload mechanism-
## Data Input Form

### Mandatory

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<td>Part-time, first time entering</td>
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<td>% Pell Students</td>
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<td>Additional Options TBD</td>
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#### Optional

Sample Only

- % Pell Students
- % Part-time Students
- % Credits Completed/Credits Attempted
- Additional Options TBD
Annual Institutional Updates: Useful and Used

• AIUs will be reviewed by staff.
  – Trend analysis rather than bright lines.
  – Staff feedback only if warranted
    • Trend thresholds trigger contact from MSCHE Staff

• Self-generated AIU reports also useful to institutions
  – Graphics enable institutions to monitor progress.
  – Ability to compare trends to aggregated peer-group.
Sample Analytics Dashboard
Midpoint Peer Review

Annual Institutional Updates
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Self-Study Evaluation
- Campus engagement in self-study process that culminates with an onsite team visit by peer evaluators

Opportunities/Input for Institutional Improvement
Midpoint Peer Review

• Based on preceding AIUs.
  – **No** PRR report or equivalent

• Peers review information

• Commission takes action
Self-Study and Team Visit

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Opportunities/Input for Institutional Improvement
Self-Study Evaluation

• Replaces decennial review

• Engages entire campus community

• Examines progress during past eight years

• Plans for future initiatives
Self-Study Evaluation: A Holistic Approach

• **Multiple Sources of Evidence**: One Action
  – Document Archive
  – Institutional Narrative
  – Team Visit

• Focus is on **institutional improvement**
Self-Study Evaluation Demonstrates Institutional Health

Self-Study Evaluation
- Institutional Narrative
- Document Archive Data
- Team Visit
- Commission Action

Medical Check-Up
- Clinical History
- Test Results/Blood Work
- Specialists’ Consultation
- Diagnosis/Prognosis

[Image of a star and a medical setting]
Document Archive

• Piloted in CIP

• “Workroom” within MSCHE Portal
  – MSCHE requested and institution-originated documents
  – May be briefly annotated to provide context

• Useful to multiple constituents
  – Institution- While developing narrative, and ongoing repository
  – Evaluators- Prior to and during site visit
Self-Study Narrative

• Focus is on institutional improvement
  – In context of the Standards

• Narrative report on major initiatives
  – Identified in previous Self-Study
  – Initiated since last Self-Study
  – Planned future initiatives
Self-Study Document

• Initiatives included in narrative will be:
  
  – **Identified** in Self-Study Design
    • Approved by MSCHE Liaison
  
  – **Broad** in scope
    • Major impact on large sectors of the institution
  
  – **Linked** specifically to appropriate Standards
    • Note final criterion of each Standard
Self-Study Narrative:
Role of each Standard’s final criterion

Periodic assessment of:

1. Mission and goals
2. Ethics and integrity
3. Student learning opportunities
4. The student experience
5. Assessment for the improvement of educational effectiveness
6. Planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources
7. Governance, leadership, and administration
Self-Study Narrative: Role of each Standard’s final criterion

- In context of initiatives, narrative presents:
  - What you learned from this assessment
  - How results informed initiatives
    - past, current and planned
## Link between Initiatives and Standards: Examples

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<td>We ensure that students will have a quality academic experience.</td>
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<td>We enable all students to succeed, before and after they study here, regardless of background or life experience.</td>
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<td>We leverage collaboration among faculty, staff, and administrators to ensure effective teaching and learning.</td>
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<td>We will be efficient in the use of our resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“We will improve and ensure student success across all demographics.”</td>
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<td>“We will ensure institutional viability.”</td>
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<td>“We will ensure a consistently high learning experience across all delivery modes, to all student populations.”</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>“The institution will become a leader in healthcare programs.”</td>
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<td>“The institution will gain prominence as a regional institution.”</td>
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<td>“The institution will incorporate service learning in all disciplines.”</td>
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Linking Self Study Reviews

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Opportunities/Input for Institutional Improvement
The Holistic Accreditation Cycle

• One prominent pathway
  – For institutions in compliance

• Alternate pathways when guidance is needed
  – Additional institutional improvement is sought

• Pathways for returning to compliance
  – Following an adverse action
Accreditation Pathways
Re-Affirmation without Recommendations
Re-Affirmation with Recommendations
Non-Compliance
Implementation Timing

• Advice from a certain scholarly work:

  Don't Panic
Implementation Timing

• CIP has already piloted major components

• New process begins with 2019-2020 cohort
  – Training begins in 2017
  – Initial group will receive face-to-face training

• Letters have gone/will go out indicating your school’s timing.
In Conclusion

• A multi-step process has brought us to this point:
  – Assessment Task Force
  – Revision of the Standards
  – Collaborative Implementation Process
  – Process Change

• A new process is nearly developed!
We Are On track to meet these goals!

- A process leading to consistent interpretation and application of the *Standards* that:
  - Enables the Commission to take unassailable actions;
  - Supports continuous institutional improvement;
  - Is respectful of the resources expended by member institutions;
  - Meets expanding Federal requirements.
Thank you for your attention!

Your Feedback, Please