

## Program Review: The Foundation for Institutional Planning and Improvement

## Learning Outcomes for Today's Discussion

- Understand the evolution of program review (Commission Standards and Institutional Processes)
- Identify a viable program review process
- Recognize an effective integrated system of program review and planning processes at the institutional level which lead to institutional improvement

## Suggestions for other learning outcomes

- Others you would you like to add?

## Some History and Context for our Discussion

- How did we get to where we are today with the Accreditation Standards and the state of the institutions we accredit?

## Institutional Evaluation, Planning and Improvement:

Meeting the integrated  
assessment requirements of  
accreditation

## Purposes of Accreditation

- To provide quality assurance to the public through assessment of institutional quality and making public the general results of that assessment.
- To stimulate institutional improvement through team recommendations given to the institution through the accreditation review process.
- To provide a vehicle for institutional self-assessment against a set of standards of good practice.

## Evolving Requirements of Accreditation Standards

## Initial Accreditation Standards

Initial accreditation (early 1960's) required basic structures and processes to be in place and minimal resources to be available.

Institutions had to have reasonable academic processes and curriculum that met the expectations of peers in "higher education" but were offered in the context of the institution's unique mission.

## What was happening at the institutional level (1960's – 1980's)?

- Informal internal processes, limited planning, tremendous growth, emphasis on curriculum and programs, limited assessment
- Mid 1980's some institutions added research functions
- Course objectives, standard outlines, transfer of credits
- Teaching Improvement: measurable objectives, technology

## In the 1990's

- Institutions had to have processes for self-assessment, planning, and improvement.
- The idea of "continuous improvement" in educational quality became a core principle of accreditation processes, with the continuous improvement driven by changing accreditation standards.
- Accreditation required assessment of institutional effectiveness; program review became the phrase used to describe the review of the effectiveness of educational programs.

## What was happening at the institutional level 1990's?

- Development of formal program review processes (mainly instructional programs)
- Development of institutional plans and processes
- Addition of research functions and use of student achievement data
- Lots of discussion on models, processes, and program improvement

## The 1996 Standards

- Required program review to incorporate data and analyses of how well students moved through courses, programs, degrees, and other discrete educational experiences.
- Institutions were asked to develop program review for all programs, and to present summative data at the institutional level in the Self Study Report, Introduction, as well as in FACT Books and on web sites.

### What was happening at the institutional level after 1996 Standards?

- Discussions on definitions and effective processes for measuring/assessing student progress, student achievement, and institutional effectiveness
- Program review processes expanded to include student services and support services
- Integration of program review with institutional planning

### What was happening at the institutional level after 1996 Standards? continued

- Planning processes connected to budgeting
- Importance of research function and use of data analysis, trends, assessment to inform decision making within governance processes
- Shift of focus from teaching to learning, classroom assessment

### What was happening at the institutional level after 1996 Standards? continued

- Uneven adoption of all of the above!

### In 2002

To the previous standards, the 2002 Standards add the focus on what students have learned as a result of attending college--- **student learning outcomes. (SLO's)**

### *Student Learning Outcomes*

- The standards place student learning outcomes (SLO's) at center of accreditation review process.
- Institutions must identify SLO's at course, program and degree level, and measure their achievement, and
- Institutions must use the assessment of learning outcomes to plan and implement improvements to educational quality

### What are Student Learning Outcomes?

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities
- Understanding
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Opinions
- Values

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

## 2002 Standards

### What are we finding now at the institutional level?

- Issues surrounding a six-year cycle and self study process
  - Snapshot of on-going systems and processes versus "getting ready for accreditation"
- Ability to meet standards with existence of previous deficiencies
- The importance of program review/on-going assessment processes integrated with institutional planning/budgeting

## 2002 Standards

### What are we finding now at the institutional level? continued

- The importance of a strong research and planning function
- Issues on assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level

### Taken together, the Standards of Accreditation call for:

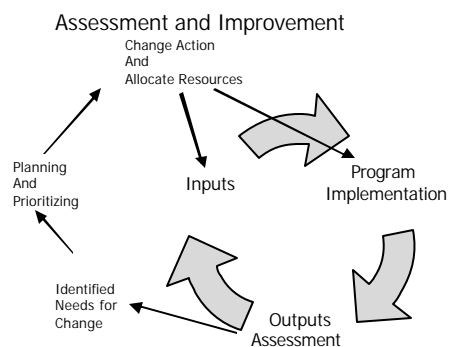
Ongoing Assessment of Quality,  
Planning and Improvement Designed  
to Improve Educational Effectiveness

## Elements in a Program Review

| Inputs   | Program Operations   | Outputs   |
|--|--|---|
| Staff # and Capacity<br>Facilities<br>Equipment<br>Funds<br>Student Needs & Preparedness<br>Etc. | Pedagogy<br>Course Syllabi and Outlines<br>Course Content<br>Instructional Support<br>Scheduling<br>Etc. | Student Achievement<br>- course completion<br>- program " " "<br>- transfer<br>- job placement<br>- etc.<br>Student Learning Outcomes |
| Given these outputs,<br>what needs to be changed or improved?                                    |  |   |

### The Foundation: Program Review Process

- **What are the components of an effective process?**
  - Data driven (quantitative/qualitative)
  - On-going and consistent (appropriate timelines)
  - Governance and research components
  - Evaluation and oversight of process
  - Systematic and institution-wide
  - Integrated with and informs planning/budgeting decisions



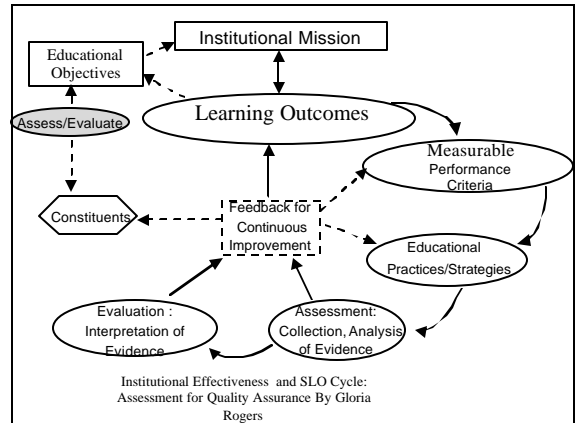
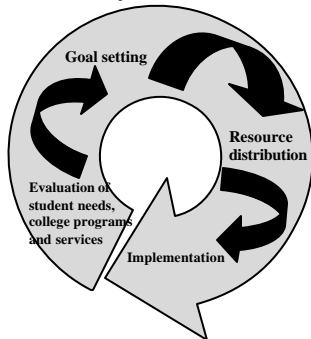
## The Foundation: Program Review Process

- **What evidence indicates effective institutional program review processes?**
  - Planning/budgeting documents all levels
  - Governance meeting minutes (language and culture)
  - Planning and budgeting **ACTIONS**
  - SLO's assessed as part of processes all levels
  - **CHANGE** documented all levels

## An Integrated System

- Student learning centered
- Program review/assessment processes at all levels of institution to achieve student progress and student learning
- Goals/Objectives for achieving student progress and student learning result in plans and budgets
- Implementation/Action/Change

## Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement



## 2002 Standards

All four standards require processes for on-going program review and assessment of educational programs and services to inform decisions on institutional planning and budgeting. Improvement is best achieved when an integrated system based on student achievement *and* student learning outcomes is used by the institution.

How did we do?

## Learning Outcomes for Today's Discussion

- Understand the evolution of program review (Commission Standards and Institutional Processes)
- Identify a viable program review process
- Recognize an effective integrated system of program review and planning processes at the institutional level which lead to institutional improvement