SANTA ANA COLLEGE

Advanced ISER Training
October 9, 2020

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Today's Learning Outcomes:

- Summarize the purpose and power of accreditation processes
- Interpret the Standards and discuss their application to SAC's policies and practices
- Apply good practices for ISER development as the SAC ISER is completed
- Understand Peer Reviewer's expectations for the ISER and the site visit

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Catherine's not so secret goal for today: help you re-engergize for the "back half" of your ISER marathon

Quick Review: Accreditation 101

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Accreditation 101

- 7 regional accreditors, 6 regions – including the Pacific Islands in the Western Region
- Similar standards based on best practices in higher ed
- Focused on using ongoing refection to inform effective practices for improvement

United States higher education has a unique commitment to peer review
- form of self-regulation; recognizes the unique communities and missions that exist within US (public, private, vocational, parochial, etc.)
- Peer review approach allows each institution to be evaluated against similar expectations for quality, but through the lens of their own individual mission, vision, and values.

Accreditation 101: Why Accredit?

- Quality assurance
- Transfer, Federal Financial Aid

- Power of Self-Reflection
- Power of Peer Review
- Power of Accredited Status

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- Commitment to improvement and excellence is an ongoing foundational for the work you do
- #accreditation365 - accreditation is part of everyday work

- ISER is like the pre-test at the beginning of the semester – not the final at the end
- Clean slate: the assumption is that you meet Standards - prior history and reports not considered
- Peer Review Processes (Team ISER Review & Focused Visit) – peer team feedback – validating your work, possibly providing recommendations (for improvement or for compliance) & formal commendations;
- Commission action – affirmation of accredited status, formal recommendations and commendations that set up the focus for the remainder of the cycle

Accreditation 101: Overall Timeline for SAC

Sept 2019:	Initial ISER Training
Sept 2020:	ACCJC & CEO identify dates for the Team ISER Review & Focused Site Visit
Oct 2020:	Advanced ISER Training
Spring 2021:	ACCJC staff recruit Peer Review Team members
Aug 2021:	**ISER and Evidence due**
Sept 2021:	Team attends training and begins review process
Oct 5-6, 2021:	**Team attends Team ISER Review and develops Core Inquiries**
March 2022:	Focused Site Visit based on Core Inquiries
April 2022:	Team Chair sends draft Team Report to SAC CEO to check for errors of fact
June 2022:	Commission review and action

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- Boldface items are the big milestones for your ISER

Checking in: Progress Reflection

- What aspects of your ISER process do you feel **most** confident about?
- What aspects of your ISER process do you feel **least** confident about?

Comments re: where you're feeling most confident:
- Good practices emerging from individual writing teams (for example, Std II team is exchanging drafts providing peer review across IIA, IIB, & IIC)
- Lots of support from constituency groups – the process is inclusive, and there are even some volunteers!

Comments re: where you're feeling least confident:
- Bringing it all together: one voice, selecting the most important evidence
- "Muscle memory" related to accreditation – we don't do this every day, so how do we begin? How do we know it's "right"? [Note from Catherine: remember there may be many "right ways" to align with Standards – it needs to make sense in the context of Santa Ana's mission, values, and culture.]

Quick Review: How to Interpret a Standard

127 (!) Standards across 14 Functional Areas

- Standard I: Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity
    A. Mission (4)
    B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (9)
    C. Institutional Integrity (14)
- Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Support Services
    A. Instructional Programs (16)
    B. Library and Learning Support Services (4)
    C. Student Support Services (8)

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There are a lot of individual Standards – they often feel redundant, and it can be difficult to see the forest through the trees as you're writing

127 (!) Standards across 14 Functional Areas

- Standard III: Resources
    - A. Human Resources (15)
    - B. Physical Resources (4)
    - C. Technology Resources (5)
    - D. Financial Resources (16)
- Standard IV: Leadership and Governance
    - A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes (7)
    - B. Chief Executive Officer (6)
    - C. Governing Board (13)
    - D. Multi-College Districts or Systems (7)

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Also, the Standards are not all equally complex and some feeling "weightier" than others.

Important to look at the big picture.

Key Concepts Embedded Throughout

- Focus on effectiveness of the institution as a whole in meeting its mission

- Adequacy of resources to support student learning

- Processes of leadership, governance, and decision-making to adapt the institution to meet a changing future

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Remember that each of these concepts is woven throughout the four "big Standards" – but addressed through the lens of that "big Standard" as appropriate

How to interpret a Standard

Step 1: Use the levels as a lens to focus on the core of the Standard

Standard II.A.1

- Standard II = Student Learning Programs and Services
- Standard II.A = Instructional Programs

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How to interpret a Standard

Step 2:   **Isolate the basic components of each sentence (i.e., subject, verb, direct object)**

Standard II.A.1:
All **instructional programs**, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education, are offered in fields of study consistent with the institution's mission, are appropriate to higher education, and culminate in student attainment of identified student learning outcomes, and achievement of degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education programs.

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How to interpret a Standard

I.C.5   The institution regularly reviews institutional policies, procedures, and publications to assure integrity in all representations of its mission, programs, and services.

versus

IV.C.7   The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly assesses its policies and bylaws for their effectiveness in fulfilling the college/district/system mission and revises them as necessary.

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What is the lens for each of these individual Standards?
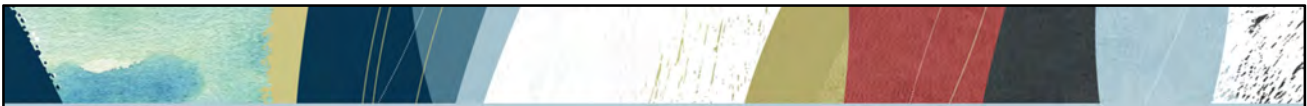What are the basic components of each?
What is the distinction, how will your narratives be different?

Consider: If IC is an institutional focus and IVC is a board focus, you do not need to address board policies in both places.

Checking in: Interpreting Standards

What specific Standards (if any) are sticky for you?

What other questions are emerging around the Standards?

Writing the ISER:
Good Practices, Tips, and Tricks

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Structure of the Institutional Analysis

Evidence of Meeting the Standard
- Indicates WHAT specific evidence demonstrates alignment with the Standard
- Briefly describes the evidence in its context

Analysis and Evaluation
- Indicates HOW the evidence demonstrates alignment with the Standard
- Evaluates the effectiveness of the policy, procedure, or practice
- *May* include improvement plans emerging from analysis and evaluation

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- The goal of this structure is to demonstrate your collective reflection on how well your practice aligns with the Standard and help your readers see how you align.

- Be judicious in selecting evidence - more is not always better.
- If you find gaps in alignment with Standards, you have an opportunity to discuss improvement processes that have begun (and do begin improvements! You do not have to wait until after the team leaves to get started. If you see something, do something!)

- We had a rich dialogue here around the idea of whether it is "safe" to acknowledge areas for institutional improvement. We acknowledged that in the past, there was a different approach to evaluation and there is lingering fear from living through those experiences. ACCJC is now training its Peer Review Teams to approach the process much differently – to come in with a growth mindset, and to practice appreciative inquiry techniques throughout the process. We're asking them to think of themselves as a thoughtful friend, who cares enough to offer honest, constructive feedback to help you reach your potential as an institution. See slides 26-28 for more on how Peer Reviewers are being trained. Also remember: Catherine will be with your peer review team throughout the process, in order to help them stay focused on interpreting the Standards in the context of Santa Ana's mission and culture.

Reflect & Self-Assess as You Go

Quick Self-Assessment for your writing teams:

- Does each response flow from appropriate evidence?

- Have we sufficiently addressed the Standard (subject, verb, direct object)?

- Have we kept our response focused ONLY on the Standard?

- How clearly do we demonstrate how the self-evaluation led to an understanding of strengths in alignment to Standards? Areas of improvement aligned to Standards?

- Do we have action plans in place to address areas of improvement?

- Do our relevant constituency groups understand the institutional processes described in the ISER?

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Other ISER Tips & Tricks

- **Always** begin with <u>relevant</u> evidence
- Focus on the core and language of the Standard
- Use the ISER Template
- Be concise – more is not necessarily better
- Use simple, clear, business-style writing
- Format as an electronic document from the start
- Link to evidentiary documents with your readers in mind
- "Freeze" any evidence from websites (PDF or Word)

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Approach the ISER as a technical report – not a presentation piece or descriptive paper. Write with clear, concise, business-style language.
There are suggested page lengths for each section in the *Guide to Self-Evaluation, Improvement, & Peer Review* -- try to stay at or near those limits!

Remember: the Peer Review Team is trained to approach your ISER and the visit with the assumption that you align with Standards. Write from that perspective, as well.

Don't Forget: Improvement Plans and the QFE

- Self-Identified Improvement plans (a.k.a. planning agenda)
  - Purpose: Plans to strengthen college's alignment to specific standards
  - Will report out on progress in the Midterm Report
- Quality Focus Essay (QFE)
  - Purpose: Long-term plans to *improve student learning and achievement*
  - Should identify intended outcomes (measurable and achievable)
  - Should identify responsible parties/groups
  - Should have a timeline
  - Will report out on results in the Midterm Report

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QFE:
- This is a frame to develop your own long-term projects, with clear, actionable goals (SMART goals)
- Connect to student learning and achievement: what specific needle do you want to move, and what plans will you implement in order to move it?
- Peer Review team will provide constructive feedback on your projects
- You will have an opportunity to report out on how the QFE projects went in your next Midterm report (approximately 4 years after the ISER)

Checking in: ISER Writing

What other questions do you have about your ISER?

Expectations of Your Peer Reviewers

Expectations of Peer Reviewers

- Seek to *understand*
- Seeking to understand *starts with the ISER*
- Practice *appreciative inquiry* on site
- *Alignment* with Standards rather than hunting for deficiencies
- Validation and *affirmation*
- *Goal*: educational quality and institutional improvement
- Outcome: the *team report*. . . reflection of your team and ACCJC

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Excerpted from Team Training materials, Fall 2020

Slide from ACCJC's Team Training, Fall 2020

Slide from ACCJC's Team Training, Fall 2020

Reviewing the College and ACCJC Core Values

- Peer: collegial, co-equal, collaborative, cordial
- Appreciative inquiry:
  - ✓ trust their expertise
  - ✓ lead with assumptions of success
  - ✓ apply your expertise in search of best practices
  - ✓ identify alignment with Standards
  - ✓ identify areas for improvement or compliance
- Triangulate consistency of information
- **Trust. Respect. Appreciate.**

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Thank you!!

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