‘How to plan for (and have) a successful WASC Senior accreditation site visit – perspectives from the front line’

Panelists

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Teri Cannon, J.D. - Executive Vice President, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, WASC

Suellen Crano, PhD., VP of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (and Board College of graduate Nursing) Western University of Health Sciences, retired

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Outline of this presentation

- Introductions
- Quick overview of evaluator tools and training (all of which are available on WASC webpages)
- What reviewers look for, how they approach the review process, what is helpful (or not)
- Questions from audience

1. New ‘review’ item: marketing and recruitment practices

TO: CEOs and ALOs:
FROM Ralph Wolff
RE: GAO Report and Senate hearings on fraud and abuse
DATE: August 16, 2010

On August 4, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions conducted hearings on recruitment abuses within the for-profit higher education sector.

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For now, we will continue to expect all Capacity and Preparatory Review teams to examine institutional documents and websites thoroughly and to discuss recruitment and admissions practices in meetings with students. Where this preliminary review suggests that further examination be conducted, we will do so.

2. Check for implementation of the 2008 Revisions to the CFR's and Institutional Review Process

WASC

Western Association of Schools and Colleges
Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

Addressing the 2008 Revisions to the CFRs and Institutional Review Process

In 2008, the Commission adopted changes to several of the Criteria for Review (CFRs) in the Standards of Accreditation and to the Institutional Review Process. The changes became effective July 1, 2008 and are being phased in over the next year to allow institutions adequate time to address them during their next interactions with WASC. [continues]

3. Expectations for Two Reviews -what is the focus of the CPR vs the EER?

WASC

Expectations for Two Reviews: Clarifying the Focus

The WASC Standards for Accreditation apply to both the Capacity and Preparatory and the Educational Effectiveness Reviews. At the same time, there are important distinctions in focus for each review, as highlighted in the first table. The second table focuses more specifically on expectations for student learning at the time of each review.

NOTE: This table is intended to be illustrative of the differences between the two reviews and does not cover all aspects of each Standard. **[only first row of table shown]**

	Capacity and Preparatory Review	Educational Effectiveness Review
Primary Focus of Each Review:	***Capacity:*** Institutional purposes, integrity, stability, resources, structures, processes, and policies including capacity to assess student learning ***Preparatory:*** Focus on issues in preparation for a successful Educational Effectiveness Review	***Student Learning:*** Evidence of educational achievement ***Institutional Learning:*** Evidence and actions for improving performance; results of review processes

4. The Educational Effectiveness Framework – a new element of the confidential team recommendation

THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS FRAMEWORK: Capacity and Effectiveness as They Relate to Student and Institutional Learning

Name of Institution: [first row only]

Key Descriptive Terms ➔ 🡻 ELEMENT & DEFINITION	INITIAL	EMERGING	DEVELOPED	HIGHLY DEVELOPED
Learning A. Student learning outcomes established; communicated in syllabi and publications; cited and used by faculty, student affairs, advisors, others (CFRs 2.2, 2.4):	For only a few programs and units; only vaguely (if at all) for GE; not communicated in syllabi, or publications such as catalogues, view books, guides to the major; only a few faculty know and use for designing curriculum, assignments, or assessment	For many programs and units, most aspects of GE; beginning to be communicated in basic documents; beginning to be used by some faculty for design of curriculum, assignments, assessments	For all units (academic & co-curricular), and for all aspects of GE; cited often but not in all appropriate places; most faculty cite; used in most programs for design of curriculum, assignments, and assessment ✓	For all units (academic and co-curricular), and for all aspects of GE; cited widely by faculty and advisors; used routinely by faculty, student affairs, other staff in design of curricula, assignments, co-curriculum, and assessment

5. Assessment Rubrics – used by the teams to evaluate the assessment of student learning – this is one of five

WASC

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes (1st row only)

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Comprehensive List	The list of outcomes is problematic: e.g., very incomplete, overly detailed, inappropriate, disorganized. It may include only discipline-specific learning, ignoring relevant institution-wide learning. The list may confuse learning processes (e.g., doing an internship) with learning outcomes (e.g., application of theory to real-world problems).	The list includes reasonable outcomes but does not specify expectations for the program as a whole. Relevant institution-wide learning outcomes and/or national disciplinary standards may be ignored. Distinctions between expectations for undergraduate and graduate programs may be unclear.	The list is a well-organized set of reasonable outcomes that focus on the key knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. It includes relevant institution-wide outcomes (e.g., communication or critical thinking skills). Outcomes are appropriate for the level (undergraduate vs. graduate); national disciplinary standards have been considered.	The list is reasonable, appropriate, and comprehensive, with clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate expectations, if applicable. National disciplinary standards have been considered. Faculty have agreed on explicit criteria for assessing students' level of mastery of each outcome.

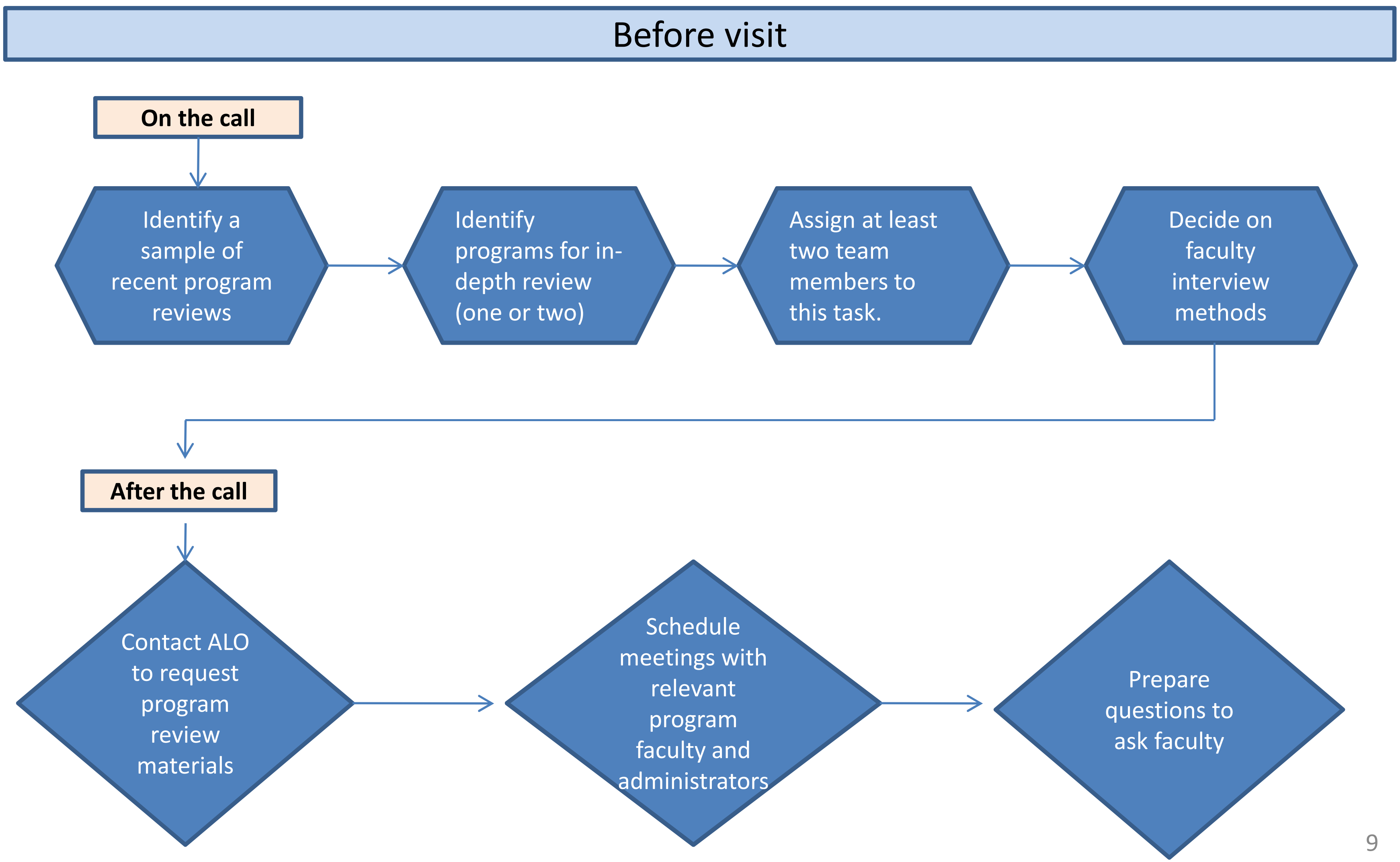
6. One of three additional 'rubrics' for the use of the team

Suggested Approaches for Evaluating Program Review on Educational Effectiveness Review Visits

WASC has placed a great deal of emphasis on program review as a key element of institutional quality assurance and improvement and a vehicle for assessing achievement of institutional and program learning outcomes. Beginning fall 2009, all institutions are required to include in their EER reports an analysis of the effectiveness of their program review process. As stated in the *Handbook of Accreditation:*

> Institutions are expected to analyze the effectiveness of the program review process, including its emphasis on the achievement of the program's learning outcomes…[continues]

7. EER Toolkit – flowchart summaries of visit processes



8a. Team report formats – look for questions in the report that are asked about the institution

Example: CPR Team Report, 4th page

- Was the CPR Report consistent with the Proposal, as approved by the Proposal Review Committee? If not, in what ways did it deviate?
- If the institution departed from the approved design or content, were the changes approved in advance by WASC staff? If not, why?
- To what extent were the departures from the original Proposal explained, appropriate, and useful to the review?

8b. Sample visit schedules – planning ahead

CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY or EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW - SAMPLE VISIT SCHEDULE					
The ALO should fill out this sample schedule as a draft and present it to the team chair and WASC staff seven weeks prior to the visit.					
Start and end times for the visit will vary, as will the individuals and groups with which the team meets.					
ALOs should consult the *Hosting a Visit Guide* for a list of the persons and committees that teams typically meet.					
The Day Before the Visit					
TIME	**Chair**	**Assistant Chair**	**Team Member 1**	**Team Member 2**	**Team Member 3** / **WASC Staff**
3-4 pm	Team arrives at hotel				
4-6 pm	First team meeting in hotel in executive session to confirm assignments, refine lines of inquiry, plan visit methods, review schedule				
6 pm	Team dinner in executive session at hotel or restaurant				

8c. Compliance audit checklist (only for certain visits…)

Compliance Audit Checklist

Instruction to team: Please attach this form to the team report. Missing documents should be noted in the recommendations section of the team report.

Name of Institution: ____

Date of Visit	Candidacy CPR:	Candidacy EER:			
	Initial Accreditation CPR:	Initial Accreditation EER:			
CFR	**Documents Required**	**Cand.**		**I.A.**	
		CPR	**EER**	**CPR**	**EER**
Standard 1					
1.1 Mission statement					
1.2 Educational objectives at the institutional and program levels					
Etc.					

9. Submission requirements – what you need to put together and send

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT MEDIA REQUIREMENTS

REPORT FORMATS - PAPER AND ELECTRONIC COPIES

For visits in spring 2010 or later, institutions must submit reports in the following formats:

1. **The institution submits to WASC** one (1) paper copy of the required essays/narrative report *AND three (3) electronic copies (USB flash drive, CD or DVD) of the full report, including essays/narrative report and all supplemental documents/appendices. Please submit the supplemental documents/appendices ONLY in electronic version.*

2. **The institution submits to each team member** one (1) paper copy of the required essays/narrative report *AND one (1) electronic copy (USB flash drive, CD or DVD) of the full report including essays/narrative report and all supplemental documents/appendices. As noted above, the supplemental documents/appendices should be submitted ONLY in electronic version.*

In addition, individual team members may request a paper copy of the supplemental materials, which the institutions should provide before the visit (if possible) or in the team room during the visit. [continues]

10. Site evaluator training – new tool set now available!

Spring 2011 Visit Tools

Please read the first document in the list below for a full description of the use of these documents. Contact Siobhan Williams, 510-748-9001, swilliams@wascsenior.org if you have any questions regarding materials for your visit.

From the training: some questions that you will probably be asked:

Covering the Impact of the Financial Recession on Institutions

- How has the financial recession affected your institution?
- How has your institution responded?
- What plans are in place in case the current state of affairs becomes permanent?

Some other useful resources

- Task Force Report on ‘Guidance on Disclosing Data to External Audiences’ (relevant to CFR 1.2)
- Task Force Report ‘WASC Resource Guide for Outcomes-Based Program Review’
- Task Force Report on ‘Student Success’

Additional considerations

- Check alignment of your IP (or Letter of Intent), CPR and EER – the team does look for this – and that there is consistency between reports to any other accrediting bodies and WASC reports – what is said in one needs to agree with the other.
- The same should be true for your institution's mission statement and strategic plan.

Some suggestions…

- Have someone who didn't work on your report read it over well before you submit it
- Check that all web links work, that appendices and references are cited in correct order
- Verify that all team room technology works
- Comments from the panelists…

Current areas of emphasis for WASC visits

Movement from assessment for institutional improvement to assessment for accountability

- Sustainability of Educational Effectiveness
- Program review
- Student success
  - Retention, graduation
  - R/G data from comparative institutions

Questions?