

Evaluation of the Accreditation System August 2009

Overview of this Report

This report provides an update on work toward a comprehensive evaluation of the Commission's accreditation system. Revisions from input from prior COA meetings have been incorporated. The information is shared as a draft chapter for the *Accreditation Handbook*.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item.

Background

Changes were made to the evaluation system in response to input from the COA. Technical Assistance that was provided to the field for each activity has been noted as well as how staff will incorporate feedback for on-going improvement and refinement of the meetings. A final question, "Does the accreditation system have an impact on student learning?" was added although there is more discussion to be had in determining what kind of data collection will be possible. Based upon that, analysis and reporting strategies will be developed.

Based upon the charts of the evaluation activities, an *Accreditation Handbook* chapter has been written and posted on the Commission's web page. This chapter follows for COA discussion.

Feedback from the COA will guide staff in revising the chapter. After the August COA meeting and revisions suggested by the COA, staff will bring the chapter back for adoption.

Chapter Thirteen

Evaluation of the Accreditation System

Introduction

This chapter provides information on how the Accreditation System will be evaluated. The evaluation system is designed to parallel the work done by institutions to meet Common Standard 2: Unit and Program Evaluation System. That is, each activity of the accreditation system will have data collected, analyzed and used to make ongoing improvement. Results then inform the larger system. The results will be reported to the COA and some of it will be included in the Annual Report presented to the Commission. The data can also be used to provide input on policy issues and provided to researchers or other interested stakeholders.

Each part of the evaluation system is designed to answer one of the questions below:

1. How well is the activity being implemented?
2. Does the activity provide useful information for other activities in the system, and, in making accreditation decisions?
3. Is the activity serving the objectives of the accreditation system?

This chapter will describe the evaluation system by providing information about each of the questions and proposed strategies for collecting data, analyzing the data and reporting information.

How well is the activity being implemented?

In order to answer this question, a variety of strategies will be used. A good starting place in determining if an activity is being implemented is to study the kind of information that was presented to the field. Therefore, data collection, analysis and improvement begin with Technical Assistance. Evaluations will be sent to participants in Technical Assistance meetings as well as those who access archived broadcasts of the meetings on-line. This data will be analyzed by both consultants and Administrator of Accreditation.

A second perspective for answering the question will come from those who completed the activity. Therefore, surveys will be sent to Program Coordinators and Deans. These surveys will ask about the process for completing a Biennial Report, Program Assessment or Site Visit and ask for elements that may need refinement or improvement. Each year, the COA will receive summary information from the surveys.

Finally, focus groups will help provide an even more in-depth understanding of how each of the activities is being implemented. The focus groups will consist of the appropriate stakeholders, such as Program Coordinators, Deans, and/or Team Leads.

Does the activity provide useful information for other activities in the system, and, in making accreditation decisions?

In 2009-2010, one cohort (Orange Cohort) will have submitted an initial Biennial Report and be submitting Program Assessment documents. Staff will share the Biennial Reports as well as the feedback with the Program Assessment readers. Readers will be asked to share if and how the Biennial Report informed their understanding of the program and the types of questions they had for the program sponsor.

Team leads and team members conducting Site Visits to Yellow Cohort institutions in 2009-2010 will be asked if and how the Preliminary Reports of Findings (Program Assessment) were useful. Results will help Program Assessment readers refine the Preliminary Reports of Findings and help staff communicate the information effectively to the Site Visit Team.

Each year as the COA makes decisions about accreditation, a debrief discussion will continue in order to understand and fine tune how information from each activity of the accreditation system informed the COA as it made its accreditation decision.

Is the activity serving the objectives of the accreditation system?

Each year the COA's Annual Report will address the objectives of the accreditation system: accountability, quality, standards and on-going improvement. Summary information may include:

- the number of technical assistance activities completed, by whom, and the stakeholder evaluations of the activities.
- a summary of institutions' a) responses to requests for additional information, b) responses to the COA's questions or concerns, and c) additional information or activities completed to address stipulations.
- summary of focus groups or stakeholder surveys who participated in each accreditation activity. Topics to be discussed and explored will be how completion of accreditation activities supported on-going improvement, preparation of quality educators, and adherence to standards.

Upon completion of the first seven-year cycle, stakeholders who have been through the entire process, from Biennial Reports to Program Assessment through Site Visits, will be surveyed or interviewed to determine changes or improvements they can trace at their institution through the entire cycle and share how the accreditation activities supported the change or might be modified to better enable on-going improvement and change.

Does the accreditation system impact student learning?

A more overarching question about the accreditation system will be added for consideration as more data become available. That is "Does the accreditation system impact student learning?"

Answers to this question may come from a variety of sources. Staff could survey employers, use results of CSU surveys on teacher preparation and consider expanding the survey to include other credential preparation areas, use Cal TIDES data as an information source and use doctoral students to research questions about the system and its impact.

The charts that follow are designed for staff use and provide a comprehensive view of the entire system. Each activity of the accreditation system, Biennial Reports, Program Assessment and Site Visits is represented by a chart with the evaluation that will be completed, how it will be analyzed and to whom it will be reported. A final chart represents the overall goal of the evaluation of the accreditation system...that is, how can one know that the accreditation system makes a difference in preparing effective educators who have a positive impact on student learning?

**EVALUATION OF THE ACCREDITATION SYSTEM
COLLECT, ANALYZE AND USE DATA FOR REPORTING AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT**

Biennial Report

Activity and Questions	Data Collected	Analysis	Reporting & Improvement
BR1—How well is the biennial report being implemented?	BR1.1 Feedback and evaluation from stakeholders from Technical Assistance meetings.	BR1.1 Collection of surveys and evaluations. Areas in need of improvement and areas of strength noted.	BR1.1 Changes made to Technical Assistance made to the field either in meetings, on website or by other means. Collection of data and improvement process are ongoing.
	BR1.2 Summary data	BR1.2 Number and types of programs submitted, trends, interesting findings.	BR1.2 Report to COA
	BR1.3 On-line surveys from Program Coordinators and Deans	BR1.3 Collection of information from those who completed Biennial Reports re: what was useful in completing the report, what was not, etc.	BR1.3 Report to COA and make any needed changes to instructions, webpage information, technical assistance meetings.
	BR1.4 Hold a focus group of Biennial Report completers to discuss process and elements that need improvement.	BR1.4 Staff collects responses to questions posed by staff and collected without rejoinder, identify themes	BR1.3 Report to COA
BR2—Does the Biennial Report provide useful information to the Program Assessment readers?	BR.2.1 Strategies to determine the answer to this question are under consideration and would first be implemented with Program Assessment for the Orange Cohort in 2008-2009.		
BR3—Does the Biennial Report provide helpful information to the Site Visit process and, in turn in making accreditation decisions?	BR 2.2 Strategies to determine the answer to this question are under consideration and would first be implemented with the Site Visits from the Orange Cohort in 2010-2011.		
BR4—Is the Biennial Report serving the objectives of the accreditation system?	BR3.1 Compile information from all sources noted above.	BR3.1 Staff summarizes information noting themes and trends.	BR3.1 Report to COA to be included in the Annual Report.

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Program Assessment

Activity and Questions	Data Collected	Analysis	Reporting & Improvement
PA1—How well is program assessment being implemented?	PA1.1 Feedback and evaluation from stakeholders from Technical Assistance meetings.	PA1.1 Collection of surveys and evaluations. Areas in need of improvement and areas of strength noted.	PA1.1 Changes made to Technical Assistance made to the field either in meetings, on website or by other means. Collection of data and improvement process are ongoing.
	PA1.2 Summary report on documents submitted.	PA1.2 Number and types of programs and institutions, trends	PA1.2 Report to COA
	PA1.3 On-line surveys from Program Coordinators and Deans	PA1.3 Compile information from survey as to what reader comments were helpful and what they found useful in the activity.	PA1.3 Report to COA Changes in instructions, webpage information, technical assistance meetings
	PA1.4 Hold a focus group of Program Assessment completers to discuss process and elements that need improvement.	PA1.1.4. Staff collects comments, notes themes	PA1.4 Report to COA
PA2—Does Program Assessment provide helpful information to the Site Visit process and, in turn in making accreditation decisions?	PA2.1 Strategies to determine the answer to this question are under consideration and would first be implemented with the Site Visits from the Yellow Cohort in 2009-2010. They might include: Questions asked on evaluations for the institution and site team members as to how well the Preliminary Report of Findings from Program Assessment was used during the site visit		
PA3—Is Program Assessment serving the objectives of the accreditation system?	PA3.1 Compile information from all sources noted above.	PA3.1 Staff summarizes information noting themes and trends.	PA3.1 Report to COA to be included in the Annual Report.

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Site Visits

Activity and Questions	Data Collected	Analysis	Reporting & Improvement
SV1—How well are site visits being implemented?	SV1.1 Feedback and evaluation from stakeholders from Technical Assistance meetings.	SV1.1 Collection of surveys and evaluations. Areas in need of improvement and areas of strength noted.	SV1.1 Changes made to Technical Assistance made to the field either in meetings, on website or by other means. Collection of data and improvement process are ongoing.
	SV1.2 Evaluation forms sent to institutional representatives, team leaders, consultant and team members with questions regarding the visit process as well as recommendations for improvement.	SV1.2 Staff to note themes in comments.	SV1.2 Report to COA and propose changes to BIR training, consultant and/or team lead training. Propose changes to information given to institutions as they prepare for the site visit.
	SV1.3 Hold meetings with Team Leaders, Consultants and COA to determine what components of the process are working (e.g., report writing, reporting to COA), and what parts are not working	SV1.3 Staff to take notes during meeting and note themes from the comments.	SV1.3 Report to COA and propose changes in instructions, webpage information, technical assistance meetings. Also propose changes to information given to institutions as they prepare for the site visit.
	SV1.4 Note how stipulations are addressed; results of re-visits and follow up activities; and changes in Biennial Reports after a site visit.	SV1.4 Staff to summarize information and note themes from the information.	SV1.4 Report to COA and summary noted in the Annual Report
SV2—Are site visits serving the objectives of the accreditation system?	SV2.1 Compile information from all sources noted above.	SV2.1 Staff summarizes information noting themes and trends.	SV2.1 Report to COA to be included in the Annual Report.

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Overall Impact of the Accreditation System

Activity and Questions	Data Collected	Analysis	Reporting & Improvement
O.1—What is the overall impact of the accreditation system?	<p>O.1.1 Survey responses from programs after once through the 7 year cycle...How has the system impacted your program? What difference has it made for program completers?</p> <p>O.1.2 At several points in the cycle, select some institutions to see if changes can be tracked from biennial reports to program assessment to site visits.</p> <p>O.1.3 Call together a focus group of Deans who went through the process to talk about changes made at the institution based upon the site visit and other accreditation activities.</p>	<p>O.1.1 Staff to summarize responses. Consider problems, if any noted repeatedly, and make suggestions for change/improvement.</p> <p>O.1.2 Staff to summarize responses. Consider problems, if any noted repeatedly, and make suggestions for change/improvement.</p> <p>O.1.3 Staff to summarize information and note themes from the information.</p>	<p>O.1.1 Report to COA and propose changes to BIR training, consultant and/or team lead training. Propose changes to information given to institutions as they prepare for the site visit.</p> <p>O.1.1 Report to COA and propose changes to BIR training, consultant and/or team lead training. Propose changes to information given to institutions as they prepare for the site visit. Report summary in the Annual Report</p> <p>O.1.3 Report to COA and summary noted in the Annual Report</p>
O.2—Does the accreditation system have an impact on the preparation of teachers in California?	<p>O.2.1.1 Survey employers.</p> <p>O.2.1.2. Use results of CSU surveys on teacher preparation and consider expanding the survey to include other credential preparation areas.</p> <p>O.2.1.3 Use Cal TIDES data as in information source.</p> <p>O.2.1.4 Use doctoral students to research questions about the system and its impact.</p>	O.2 Staff summarizes information noting themes and trends.	O.2 Report to COA to be included in the Annual Report.
O.3—Does the accreditation system have an impact on student learning?	O.3.1 Data collection to be determined.	O.3.1 Analysis will be based upon the types of data collected and are to be determined.	O.3.1 Reporting and Improvement strategies to be determined based upon the types of data collected.