Discussion of Survey Results from Site Visit Teams, Team Leads, and Institutions from 2018-19 Accreditation Visits
October 2019

Overview of this Report

This report provides the COA with information on the site visit evaluation surveys that are used to help evaluate the accreditation system and especially the site visit process. The surveys provide the opportunity to identify and discuss ways in which the accreditation system is working effectively and efficiently as well as where the COA might consider the need to make adjustments to the accreditation process.

Staff Recommendation

This item is for information only. No action is required.

Background

Each year staff gathers information from those involved in site visits to gauge how well the accreditation system is working and whether any improvements or efficiencies should be made. Four different surveys have been used after each site visit providing various stakeholders with opportunity to provide input to the process. They are as follows:

1. Institution Survey
2. Team Lead Survey
3. Team Member Survey
4. Consultant Survey

In 2018-2019, accreditation site visits were conducted with the 35 institutions in the Yellow Cohort. Each site visit consisted of 1-2 Commission Consultants, a Team Lead and approximately 3-6 additional team members. Staff uses these surveys to monitor how effective and efficient the accreditation process and procedures are and to determine if any changes are necessary. The information gathered from the evaluations will be used to make improvements to the system, to identify possible team leads in the future, to identify any future additions to training and technical assistance activities, and to address any concerns that may exist as a result of the manner in which the Commission's accreditation processes have been implemented.

Some of the highlights from the survey results are included below.

Survey Responses from Institutional Personnel

The institution evaluations were created to allow the institutions the opportunity to offer feedback regarding the support provided by the Commission staff leading up to the site visit, support from the Team Lead during the site visit as well as allow institutions to share feedback regarding the improvement of the accreditation process. The Commission received 36 completed responses on the institutional survey (although not all respondents answered all questions). The Commission does not limit the number of personnel from an institution who may respond but typically responses are received from unit leadership and/or the accreditation coordinator.

Overall, the feedback from institutions is positive. Examples of the results of a few key questions are provided for COA information.

Q4 In working with the Commission prior to the beginning of the site visit please rate how effective the primary Consultant was in each of the following:

The table below shows that institutions rated the Consultants positively for most of the five different aspects identified in the survey—the numbers in the table show the percentage of responses as well as the number of institutions that selected that response. 82% of respondents rated consultants as either strong or excellent for the 2 month out previsit and the information shared prior to the visit.

Some institutions expressed a need for more assistance on reviewing of the preliminary report of findings and review of common standards. This response is not unexpected since the preliminary report of findings for Program Review was in its first year of implementation and it is not appropriate for consultants to provide institutions with definitive responses to how the institution should respond to the feedback from reviewers. Instead the consultant can assist more broadly in how the institution might think about responding. The topic where the institutions responded that the support from the consultant was lowest is around the year out previsit, however, this survey result is impacted by the large number of individuals who suggested that they were unable to evaluate. This could be due to turnover in institutional staff in the year prior to the site visit.

	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Excellent	Total
Year-Out Pre-visit webinar/Visit to Institution	0	2.94% / 1	23.53% / 8	47.06% / 16	34
2 Month Out Pre-visit	0	5.88% / 2	17.65% / 6	64.71% / 22	34
Review of Preliminary Report of Findings (preliminary alignment of program standards, program summaries)	0	8.82% / 3	17.65% / 6	61.76% / 21	34
Review of Common Standards Feedback/Addendum	0	11.76% / 4	14.71% / 5	61.76% / 21	34
Information shared prior to the visit (scheduling interviews, logistics planning, contract information, etc.)	0	11.76% / 4	17.65% / 6	64.71% / 22	34

Q6. In working with the Commission consultant during the site visit, please evaluate the consultant with respect to each of the following:

	Unable to evaluate	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Excellent	Total
Responsiveness	2.94%	0.00%	0.00%	11.76%	85.29%	34
Objectivity	5.88%	0.00%	0.00%	20.59%	73.53%	34
Management of the team	8.82%	0.00%	0.00%	17.65%	73.53%	34
Communication to the institution	2.94%	0.00%	0.00%	14.71%	79.41%	34
Professionalism, respectfulness, knowledge of the process	2.94%	0.00%	0.00%	14.71%	82.35%	34

The responses above indicate that consultants are providing a high level of service to the institutions undergoing accreditation.

Q9 In working with the Team Lead, please rate the Team Lead with respect to each of the following:

Of the areas surveyed about the team lead from the institutional perspective, the responses that were either strong or excellent ranged from 84.38 percent to 93.76 percent indicating that generally, institutions were well satisfied with the level of service provided by the team leads.

One respondent identified a "weak" area in communication that was shared in a fair objective and professional manner. Improvement can also be made in the areas that were identified as "adequate" such as team lead demonstrating understanding of the accreditation system and site visit process (6.25%), communication was clear in pre-visit meetings, mid-visit report and exit report (12.50%), and communication shared in a fair objective and professional manner (3.13%).

	Unable to evaluate	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Excellent	Total
Team lead demonstrated understanding of the accreditation system and site visit process	0	0	6.25% / 2	9.38% / 3	84.38% / 27	32
Communication was clear in pre-visit meetings, mid-visit report and exit report	3.13% / 1	0	12.50% / 4	15.63% / 5	68.75% / 22	32
Communication was shared in a fair objective	0	3.13% / 1	3.13% / 1	18.75% / 6	75% / 24	32

	Unable to evaluate	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Excellent	Total
and professional manner						

Q11 To what extent do you feel the seven year accreditation cycle provides a fair and objective assessment of your institution and all of its credential programs?
Notable is the responses from institutions about the overall fairness of the process. On the survey, 96.67% of institutional respondents noted that the process was either moderately fair or very fair. Only 3.33% of the respondents felt the process was only somewhat fair. On whether the process was an objective assessment, 77.42% of respondents felt that the process was very objective, with another 12.9% indicating the process was moderately objective. No one said the process was not objective, however 9.68 percent thought the process was somewhat objective.

In reviewing the responses to determine whether there was any indication about those that thought the process was only somewhat fair or objective, one respondent indicated that more technical manuals should be developed, another thought reviewer bias was going to always be a potential issue, and still another felt as if the reviewer went beyond the standards. An additional person felt that the process did not recognize the innovative quality aspects of their program and was too focused on compliance with the standards.

Institutions provided positive feedback to assist Commission staff and other institutions for future site visits. Institutions felt supported, staff was knowledgeable, responses timely and helpful, and that staff was accessible and friendly. A common strategy that was often mentioned that was helpful prior to the site visit was communication and keeping constant dialogue with faculty, staff, and directors to prioritize tasks. As potential improvements to the site visit process, institutions recommended that team members review all materials including modifications prior to the site visit. It was also suggested that website templates be provided to the institutions or examples of acceptable accreditation webpages that were found to be effective by the Commission.

Survey Responses from Team Leads
Team Leads were also provided the opportunity to offer feedback on the site visits they were assigned to for the 2018-19 accreditation year. This survey allowed the team lead to recommend team members who they believed could assume a leadership position on future site visits teams, identify areas where team members needed additional support, and identify strategies that were used effectively to help the site visit team complete its work.

Team Leads identified the following effective strategies used during the site visit or made the following comment:
- Communication. Meetings with the team members prior to the visit to go over any questions in preparation for the visit.
- Asking the team members to submit a draft report before the visit. This allowed all team members to review the evidence and organize it. It also gave the team lead advance notice of anyone that needed assistance.

- Working to keep everyone calm and focused even when challenges arose during the visit. Talking through the justification for findings with team members to ensure everyone was on the same page and interpreting the data in similar ways.
- Be exceptionally well prepared, engaged in the process, open minded, honest, good humored, and passionate about education. Do not be a know-it-all. Be willing to compromise.
- Created a spreadsheet of the documentation for each of the program and common standards so that it could be checked off once reviewed. It was then a quick copy/paste into the final report.
- Keep notes and documents organized.

Survey Responses from Team Members

Team members completed evaluations that allowed them to communicate strategies used by the Consultant, Team Lead, team members and the host institution that were both effective and ineffective during the site visit. They were able to rate their consultant and team lead on specific areas of support provided such as communication, facilitating the work of the team, and assisting them with coming to a consensus on decisions. Of the 64 respondents, 60 team members felt they had the right size team to do a thorough job. Team members found that the new format of the Common Standards report was useful.

The team members offered the following effective strategies that were suggested by, or general comments about, the Consultant or Team Lead:
- The consultant asked general, thought-provoking questions to help keep the team members on track.
- The Team lead made everyone feel comfortable and heard throughout the process and asked questions when she was not sure. This was a highly collaborative visit.
- Strong collaboration skills and a true seek to understand mindset.
- Putting everything on google docs.
- Found to be exceptionally helpful was the support in e.g., answering any question I had, providing encouragement when I felt ill equipped, providing a model of leadership by how the consultant and team lead work together between each other and then with each of us as well as the CAPE lead and providing an avenue to help us remain focused.
- Prep meetings and the use of Google drive were extremely helpful.
- Keeping everyone on schedule.
- Frequent communication, timelines, essential information emails, gently reminders, all of these were so very helpful.
- Consultant continually kept us updated as to any new information that was revealed and provided guidance (reference back to the Standards) when we were trying to match evidence.
- The Team Lead was very adamant about gathering information and seeking to understand prior to drawing conclusions. This was helpful when it came to really thinking about the program and how it was meeting the standards. The consultant asked

questions that helped us clarify and communicate. Both were extremely professional when the team experienced some unexpected challenges.

Ineffective strategies that were suggested are:
- The interview schedule was problematic in that it did not appear the interviewees were prepared to meet and perhaps did not have a strong understanding of the value and importance of their input.
- The prep work leading up to the visit was not enough.
- Staff did not understand how to organize evidence for ease of reviewing.
- Technology was not was effective with many delays.
- Difficulties facilitating conversations and interview questions across several phone calls, video conferencing from two locations, and face-to-face stakeholders in the room. Managing information gathering across all these platforms at once became problematic where different technology did not work as effectively as others
- More information and better organization of institution website.

Survey Responses from Consultants
The Consultant survey allowed the Consultant the opportunity to provide feedback on the Team Lead and Team Members. The Consultant is able to identify potential team leads for future visits and team members who may need additional training or assistance. Overall, the Consultants had a positive review of the team members and team leads. Fourteen of the fifteen respondents said they would recommend the person as a team lead in the future and they would like to have them on future teams. The majority of respondents believed that they had just the right size team for their visit. There was one suggestion that more practice on writing reports at the BIR training maybe be helpful.

Next Steps
Staff seeks any input from the COA on these survey results. Staff will take the results of the surveys and use them as a tool to help improve the site visit process including modifying the BIR training, the Team Lead meeting, and team member refresher trainings. Staff will provide a summary of site visit evaluation results after each accreditation site visit cycle to the Committee.