CSU, CHICO
Comprehensive Review for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

February 12, 2016
Richard Osborn, Vice President
WASC Senior College and University Commission
Agenda for the Day

• The changing context for accreditation
• Overview of Regional Accreditation & WSCUC
• 2013 WSCUC Standards and Criteria for Review
• The institutional review process
• The institutional self-study and report
• Commission action
• Tools and resources
Agenda for the Day

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Changing Context for Accreditation

• Greatly increased expectations for institutional accountability and consumer protection

• Demands for improved academic standards and student performance (as measured by retention, graduation rates, evidence of high performance on institution’s learning outcomes, and post-graduation job placement)

• New fiscal realities making cost-effectiveness a paramount issue forWSCUC and its constituents
Challenges for Higher Education and Accreditation

- Low graduation rates
- High student debt/high default rates
- Difficulty in transferring credits
- Dissatisfaction with quality of undergraduate education/low levels of learning
- Rapid growth of online education
- Growth of the for-profit industry
- Increased federal regulation
Challenges for Higher Education and Accreditation (continued)

- Changing demographics, including older, working, more diverse students
- Swirl: majority of students attend more than one institution
- Emergence of open source and Do-It-Yourselfers (DIY)
- Rapid growth of online programs/institutions
- Momentum for competency-based programs
- Shrinking support for public universities and trend to privatization
- Changing faculty models
SHIFTING ROLE OF ACCREDITATION

• Compliance centered
• Improvement centered
• Accountability centered
# How Accreditation is Changing

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<th>Compliance Centered</th>
<th>Improvement Centered</th>
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<td>Focus of Review</td>
<td>All standards applied to assure compliance</td>
<td>Key areas selected and approved by accreditor for improvement</td>
<td>Specific areas identified as part of all reviews to address common policy issues—e.g., retention/graduation rates, student learning outcomes</td>
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<td>Demonstration of Effectiveness</td>
<td>Must demonstrate standards are met at least at minimum level</td>
<td>Simplified compliance review and primary emphasis on recommended improvements</td>
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<td>Public Reporting and Transparency</td>
<td>Public announcement of grant of accreditation</td>
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The Regulatory Triad

Accreditors: recognized by the Secretary of Education as reliable authorities concerning the quality of education or training offered by institutions and programs they accredit.
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Accrediting Associations

• National

• Regional

• Disciplinary and Professional
# TYPES OF ACCREDITATION

**WSCUC IS:**

- **REGIONAL** – defined by location (CA, HI, and Pacific Islands)

- **INSTITUTIONAL** – focused on the institution as a whole, not on any specific degree programs

- **SENIOR COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES** – focused on institutions that offer baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees

- **RECOGNIZED** – by U.S. Department of Education

**NATIONAL:** also institutionally focused, but not defined by location

- Faith-related
- Career-related

**PROGRAMMATIC:** focused on assuring quality of specific programs or professions
Regional, National, and Programmatic
REGIONAL ACCREDITATION

• Accreditation of the entire institution, not of its individual degree programs or schools
• Quality assurance for the stability and strength of all levels of the organization
• Non-governmental agency (though as a “gate-keeper” for receiving federal funds)
• Peer review: Trained volunteer educators drawing conclusions about academic quality and institutional effectiveness
Core Values of Regional Accreditation

• Institutional autonomy: Operating free from undue government intervention
• Institutional diversity: Supporting a vast array of institutional types and missions
• Academic freedom: Ensured by the institution for its faculty and students
• Shared governance: Faculty voice in matters of curriculum and research
• Student success: Enabling students to succeed through measures of educational effectiveness
Strengths of Regional Accreditation

• **Signal of quality**
  – By using agreed-upon standards and review processes, based on quality principles, it carries great credibility

• **Opportunity for self-improvement:**
  – Provides both quality assurance (QA) to the public and urges continuous quality improvement (CQI) to the institution

• **Learning across institutions:**
  – Creation of a “learning community” among educators

• **Alternative to government regulation:**
  – Avoiding the political interventions and government bureaucracies of a federal agency

• **Transfer of Credits:**
  – Ease of transferring credits between institutions
WSCUC INSTITUTIONS

- Public / Private
- Non-profit / For profit
- On ground / Online
- Secular / Faith-based
- General / Specialized
- Large / Small
- Old / New
Summary of WSCUC Institutions

- 177 accredited institutions
- ~ 1,200,000 students
- Variety of missions, programs and institutional types
Breakdown by Category

• 177 Accredited Institutions
  – 19 For Profit (10.3%)
  – 158 Non Profit (89.7%)
    • 115 Private Non Profit (65.7%)
    • 42 State supported Non Profit (24.0%)
• 10 Candidate (4 For Profit, 6 Non Profit)
• 27 Eligible (11 For Profit, 15 Non Profit, 1 State)
• 12 Applied (3 For Profit, 3 Non Profit, 4 Unknown)
• 224 Total Institutions

***Due to recent activity, these numbers may not be completely accurate***
Number of Accredited Institutions

- 9.5% For Profit (12.3% Headcount)
- 90.5% Not for Profit (87.7% Not for Profit Head Count)
  - (27.3% Private; 60% State Supported)
- 24.9% Public (60.5% Headcount)
- 75.1% Independent (39.5% Headcount)
WSCUC Institutions

• 30 institutions in eligibility
  – CA, Czech Republic, UAE, Turkey, Ecuador, Peru
WSCUC COMMISSIONERS

• 27 volunteer members
• Nominated and voted upon by the heads of member institutions
• Represent the region and the general public
• Meet three times a year
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2013 Core Commitments and Standards of Accreditation

Three Core Commitments

Four Standards

• Criteria for Review (CFR)
• Guidelines
2013 Core Commitments

• Student Learning and Success

• Quality and Improvement

• Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability
Core Commitment: Student Learning and Success

“Institutions have clear educational goals and student learning outcomes….Institutions support the success of all students and seek to understand and improve student success.”
Core Commitment: Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability

“...Institutions engage in sound business practices, demonstrate institutional integrity, operate in a transparent manner, and adapt to changing conditions.”
Core Commitment: Quality and Improvement

“Institutions are committed to high standards of quality in all of their educational activities…. Institutions demonstrate the capacity to fulfill their current commitments and future needs and opportunities.”
2013 Standards of Accreditation

- Standard 1
- Standard 2
- Standard 3
- Standard 4
Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

- Institutional Purpose
- Integrity and Transparency

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions

- Teaching and Learning
- Scholarship and Creative Activity
- Student Learning and Success
Standard 3:
Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

- Faculty and Staff
- Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources
- Organizational Structures and Decision-making Processes

Standard 4:
Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

- Quality Assurance Processes
- Institutional Learning and Improvement
Criteria for Review (CFR)

- Provide statements about the meaning of the Standard
- Are cited by institutions in their report, by teams in evaluating institutions, and by the Commission in making decisions
Guidelines

• Offer examples of how an institution can address a particular CFR

• Are not requirements or mandatory
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Key Elements of Comprehensive Review

- Institutional review process
- Offsite Review
- Accreditation Visit
- Team report (posted on WSCUC website)
- Institutional self-study and report
- Nine components
- “Review under the Standards and Compliance with Federal Standards”
- “Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators”
- Commission action and letter (posted on WSCUC website)
The Schedule for the Review of Chico State

- Offsite Review (OSR) scheduled for Fall 2018
- Accreditation Visit (AV) scheduled for Spring 2019
- Institutional report due ten weeks before the date of the Offsite Review
The Offsite Review (OSR): Description

- Takes place on one day in WASC offices
- Focuses on institutional report
- Includes a video conference with institutional representatives
- Results in “Lines of Inquiry” document sent to institution by team
- No Commission action
The OSR:
The Institutional Report

- Has the institution responded to previous Commission actions?
- Has the institution responded to the components?
- Has it collected and analyzed data effectively?
- Are its conclusions supported by evidence?
- What are the strengths of the institution?
- Are there problems or potential areas of noncompliance?
- Does the report contain recommendations for further institutional action?
The Accreditation Visit (AV)

- Takes place three - six months after OSR
- Institution responds to Lines of Inquiry eight weeks before the visit
- Team comes to campus for three days
- Team report and recommendation sent to WSCUC Commission
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IT’S YOUR STORY
Write it in a way that you would want to read it
The Institutional Report

REFLECT AND RESEARCH BEFORE YOU WRITE

(“Review under WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements” and “Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators”)
The Institutional Report

• You may reorder and combine components

• You are not expected to respond to prompts literally

• Define (discuss), measure (assess), analyze, act (plan)

• Be self-reflective
Institutional Report: Nine Components

1. Introduction: Institutional context
2. Compliance
3. Meaning, Quality, Integrity of Degree
4. Educational Quality
5. Student Success
6. Quality Assurance
7. Sustainability
8. Institution-Specific Themes (optional)
9. Conclusion
Institutional Report  Component 1: Introduction: Context, Response to Previous Commission Actions

- Addresses history, mission, core constituencies, recent changes
- Gives reviewers a picture of the institution’s distinctive character
- Responds to issues identified in previous Commission action letters
- Use the prompts as discussion-starters for the institution
Chico State was granted the maximum 10-year term allowed with NO Interim Report (very rare).
The Commission Action Letter focused on four areas for continued attention:
1. Engaging students at a residential campus
2. Refining the assessment and academic program review process
3. Using technology innovatively
4. Increasing institutional effectiveness and accountability
Institutional Report
Component 2: Compliance with Standards

- One document: “Review under WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements”

- Compliance includes four required Department of Education forms that must be completed by team members
  - Credit hour policy
  - Marketing and recruitment
  - Student complaints
  - Transfer policy
Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements

- Institution reviews itself under the Standards and under four federal requirements

- Review worksheet is submitted by the institution in advance of the visit with links to documents

- Team verifies the information which constitutes a major part of verifying compliance with WSCUC Standards

- Review worksheets are attached as an appendix to the team report
Compliance: Credit Hours

Questions for the institution:

• Does the institution have a policy for assigning credit hours?

• How does the policy address non-standard courses (e.g., labs, studios, internships, individual directed studies)?

The team:

• Reviews a sample of syllabi for non-standard courses
• Examines one term’s course schedule
• Completes Credit Hour form as an appendix to team report
Compliance: Student Complaints

Questions for the institution:

- Does the institution have a policy for handling student complaints?
- Does the institution maintain records of student complaints?
- Does the institution follow its required policies in handling complaints?

The team:

- Verifies that the student complaint policy is readily accessible and adhered to
- Completes Student Complaint form as an appendix to team report
Compliance: Marketing and Recruitment

Questions for the institution:

• Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?
• Does the institution provide accurate information about time to degree and overall cost of the degree?
• As applicable, does the institution provide accurate information about careers and employment?

The team:

• Verifies that the institution provides accurate and truthful information in marketing and recruiting materials and in contacts with potential students
• Confirms that the institution follows federal regulations
• Completes Marketing and Recruitment form as an appendix to team report
Compliance: Transfer Policy

Questions for the institution:

- Does the institution have a policy or procedure for reviewing and receiving transfer credits?
- Is the policy publicly available?
- Has the institution established criteria for transfer of credits?

The team:

- Verifies that the transfer policy is readily accessible, includes criteria, and is adhered to
- Completes Transfer Policy form as an appendix to team report
Compliance: Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

• Provides an overview of the institution’s assessment processes

• Requests brief narrative information for each degree program

• Ensures that every degree program has in place a quality assurance system for assessing, tracking, and improving the learning of its students
Institutional Report
Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees

Meaning

• What does a degree from the institution mean?
• What does it say students are capable of doing?
• What are the distinctive experiences and learning outcomes of an education at the institution?
• What does the degree all add up to?
• Is it more than the sum of its parts?
• What are the parts?
• What’s the overarching goal?
Quality

- How rich are the experiences that the institution offers?
- How challenging? How rigorous?
- What quality assurance processes exist at the institution to guide improvement?
Integrity

- To what extent are all the parts of the educational experiences coherent, aligned, and intentional?
- To what extent does the institution deliver what it promises to deliver?
- How well does the institution achieve what it sets out to do?
- How does it know?
- How does it communicate about its degrees to internal and external audiences?
Definition & Relationship between the MQID Components

**MEANING**
A description of degree outcomes from a holistic institutional perspective.

**QUALITY**
Defining the expected level at which graduates will have achieved the expected degree outcomes.

**INTEGRITY**
The cohesion of the degree and its relationship with external expectations of meaning & quality.
**Definition & Relationship between the MQID Components**

**MEANING** - A description of degree outcomes from a holistic institutional perspective. Defined in terms of expected student learning outcomes.

**QUALITY** - Defining the expected level at which graduates will have achieved the expected degree outcomes. Demonstrated through the assessment processes.

**INTEGRITY** - The cohesion of the degree and its relationship with external expectations of meaning & quality. Demonstrated through:
- Alignment of learning outcomes at various levels.
- Alignment with external requirements.
Institutional Report
Component 4: Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation

Student Learning

• What do students learn in General Education? The major? Elsewhere?

• How well do students learn?

• How does the institution know?

• What’s “good enough?”
Institutional Report
Component 4: Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation (continued)

Core Competencies (Chico responsible for 5)

- Writing
- Oral Communication
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy

Questions to pose

- How well do students perform at or near graduation?
- How does the institution know?
- What’s “good enough”? 
• Resources for Core Competencies
  – Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)
  – AAC&U LEAP Outcomes
  – AAC&U Value Rubrics
  – WASC MQID Rubric
  – Institutional reports already completed
  – Educational Programming Workshops
Institutional Report
Component 5: Student Success: Student Learning, Retention and Graduation (continued)

• CFR 1.2: Educational objectives are widely recognized throughout the institution, are consistent with stated purposes, and are demonstrably achieved. The institution regularly generates, evaluates, and makes public data about student achievement, including measures of retention and graduation, and evidence of student learning.

• WSCUC will asks for this webpage link as part of the annual reporting
Institutional Report
Component 5: Student Success: Student Learning, Retention and Graduation (continued)

• How does the institution define student success (accounting for completion and learning) given its mission, values, programs and the students it serves?
• How does the institution promote student success?
• How well are students doing in meeting the institution’s definition of student success?
Institutional Report
Component 5: Student Success: Student Learning, Retention and Graduation (continued)

- Retention Rates
- Graduation Rates
- Time-to-degree Data
- Learning outcomes
-WSCUC Graduation Dashboard
- Licensing exam passage rate
- Board certification
- Employment
- Student engagement (NSSE, UCUES, Locally developed surveys)
• Include degree-seeking students in undergraduate and graduate programs

• Disaggregate by race/ethnicity, using National Center for Education Statistics definitions, and gender; by program or major

• Include multiple years of data

• 3 years; 5 years
Institutional Report
Component 5: Student Success: Student Learning, Retention and Graduation (continued)

For retention and graduation data:

- Does the institution report 3-5 year trends in retention and graduation rates (aggregated and disaggregated)?
- What do the data show?
- Has the institution benchmarked its rates against peer institutions or aspirational institutions?
- Does the institution have goals with timelines to make improvements overall or for subgroups, as appropriate?
- Does the team judge the institution’s graduation rates to be satisfactory?
Examples of Retention and Graduation Rates

- IPEDS
- College Navigator
- National Student Clearinghouse
- College Portraits
- Absolute Graduation Rate (Dashboard)
Institutional Report
Component 5: Student Success: Student Learning, Retention and Graduation (continued)

• May include data comparisons with other institutions
  • Institutions similar in mission, size, student populations
  • Aspirational institutions
• Decide what to do with a small number of students in a sub-population or cohort
  • When to remove students from the data
Institution may consider and reflect the effect of:

- the way students matriculate (first time; transfer lower division, upper division)
- enrollment patterns (part time; stop and return; transfer and return)
- differences in types of programs International students
Institutional Report
Component 5: Student Success: Student Learning, Retention and Graduation (continued)

- Trends; changes over time
- Results you consider “too low,” or otherwise unacceptable
- Disaggregated results compared with overall
- Comparison of results with similar institutions; aspirational institutions; internal programs
- Challenges to improving results; factors that influence data
- Recommendations for improvement
Institutional Report
Component 5: Student Success: Student Learning, Retention and Graduation (continued)

- Student success is strong retention and degree completion rates AND high-quality learning
- Add 5 pages to recommended length of this component to include narrative about R&G data
- Component should address learning and personal development dimensions
Institutional Report
Component 5: Student Success: Student Learning, Retention and Graduation (continued)

Absolute Graduation Rate (Dashboard)

What is it?
How is it calculated?
How is it interpreted?

Information about the Dashboard is on theWSCUC website:  http://www.wascstudent.org/resources/about-the-graduation-rate-dashboard
Institutional Report
Component 5: Student Success: Student Learning, Retention and Graduation (continued)

- Student Success Support Efforts
  - How do you promote success?
  - What role does assessment, including program review play?
  - What kind of academic support do you provide?
  - What role does student affairs play?
Institutional Report
Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program Review, Assessment, Use of Data and Evidence

- Program review
- Assessment of student learning
- Data collection, analysis, and use in decision-making
Program Review

Questions to answer:

• Is there a robust system of cyclical program review (including the co-curricular)?
• Does it include findings from assessment of student learning?
• Is program review tied to planning and budgeting?
• Will program review promote the sustainability of assessment?
• Has program review resulted in attention to and enhancement of student learning?
Assessment of Student Learning

Has the institution:

• Defined student learning outcomes?
• Gathered evidence of student learning?
• Analyzed and interpreted the evidence?
• Used this information to improve student learning?
Use of Data and Evidence

Areas to explore:

• How adequate is the institutional research function?
• How effectively does it support and inform decision-making, planning and improvement?
• Does the institution have a habit of using evidence to make decisions?
Institutional Report
Component 7: Sustainability: Financial Viability, Preparing for Changing Higher Education Environment

• Financial viability

• Changing ecology
Institutional Report
Component 7: Sustainability: Financial Viability, Preparing for Changing Higher Education Environment (continued)

Financial viability

• Are resources allocated according to institutional priorities?
• Does the allocation process includes strategic planning, operational execution, institution-wide evaluation, recalibration?
• Is the institution financially sustainable?
Changing Ecology

• What changes taking place globally, nationally and locally will affect the institution?
• What is the institution’s vision of education for the coming decade?

http://www.wascsenior.org/redesignconceptpapers
Institutional Report
Component 8: Institution-Specific Themes

Optional

Selected theme(s) to advance institutional priorities
Institutional Report
Component 8: Institution-Specific Theme(s)

• Optional

• Introduce in Component 1

• Alert WSCUC staff liaison so an appropriate team member can be selected
Institutional Report
Component 9: Conclusion: Reflection and Plans for Improvement

• What did the institution learn through the self-study process?

• What are the plans for the future based on what was learned?
Institutional Report

Exhibits

• “Review under the WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements”

• “Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators”

• Institution-selected exhibits in support of narrative
The Institutional Report: Format, Length, and Submission

• 50 – 75 pages, double spaced, 12 point font

• Name attachments so they reference text (Not: “Exhibit 1”)

• Will be submitted via the cloud (Box.com)

• More is not better…necessarily
Team Report:  
WSCUC Style Guide

• Provides information on editorial style and usage conventions for writing team reports

• Located on WSCUC website:

http://www.wascsenior.org/content/wscuc-style-guide
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Commission Review

- Commission Panel reads report and documentation including institution’s written response, talks with institutional representatives at Commission meeting
- Panel makes recommendation to Commission, and Commission acts
- Staff finalizes draft action letter on behalf of Commission
- Letter and team report are publicly available on WSCUC website
- Link provided on WSCUC website, if desired, to institution’s response to team report
Team Recommendations:
Options for Length of Time for Reaffirmation:

- **10 Years**
  The institution is in substantial compliance with the Standards and has no consequential issues that affect the institution’s ability to carry out its mission at a high level of quality.

- **8 Years**
  The institution is in substantial compliance with the Standards but has one or more identifiable issues that may affect the institution’s ability to carry out its mission at a high level of quality.

- **6 Years**
  The institution is receiving Initial Accreditation or coming off of Sanction. In rare cases of reaffirmation where there is evidence that raises more significant concerns regarding its ability to carry out its mission at a high level of quality, possibly because of a particularly acute issue or issues, the period of reaffirmation will be six years.
Team Recommendations:
Interaction with WSCUC in the Interval

• Progress Report
• Interim Report
• Special Visit
Mid-Cycle Review

A check-in near the midpoint of an institution’s period of accreditation

Focuses on student achievement:
- Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators
- Retention and graduation data

More information is available at:
http://www.wascsenior.org/resources/mid-cycle_review
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Tools: **WSCUC Resources**

- Materials on box (for visit)
- Materials on website (wascsenior.org)
Tools: WSCUC Liaison

- Counselor
- Coach/ Trainer
- Collaborator
- Communicator/Interpreter
- AND lastly
- Compliance Officer
Tools: WSCUC Liaison

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Questions, Comments?