**Why You Should Become Involved in Accreditation**

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**You Already Are Involved**

- **Muffo** (2003, *The Primer for Institutional Research*, Chapter 1) notes that support for accreditation is one of the most important and sometimes most challenging activities for IRers.

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**You Already Are Involved**

- IRers become involved in accreditation  
  - During the preparation of annual accreditation reports  
  - During the preparation of self-studies  
  - During site visits as a result of questions raised  
  - In preparing follow-up reports

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**You Can Help Improve Your Institution’s Accreditation Experience By Becoming More Involved**

- In recent years accrediting agencies have shifted their focus from inputs (e.g., faculty credentials, libraries, facilities) to outcomes (e.g., direct and indirect measures of student learning and development); this implies challenges for IRers and those involved in assessment.

- Learning about the perspectives, criteria, processes, and terminology of accrediting agencies will make your life easier as you are called upon to provide information support.

- You may be surprised how quickly you come to learn more about accreditation than “those responsible.”
You Can Help Improve Your Institution’s Accreditation Experience By Becoming More Involved

- You can learn more about accreditation by
  - Meeting with people on your campus who already know about accreditation, attending meetings, etc.
  - Reading materials such as handbooks and web sites
  - Attending conferences (e.g., HLC annual meeting each March)

Assist Your Institution and Advance Your Career by Even More Formal Involvement

- Volunteer to be a member of your institution’s accreditation steering committee
  - Take some control of your workload
  - Keep the process grounded in information, not anecdote
  - You may know more than the rest of them!

Assist Your Institution and Advance Your Career by Even More Formal Involvement

- Consider volunteering to be your institution’s self-study coordinator or co-coordinator
  - Depends on campus culture
  - Change the standing of yourself and your office on campus
  - There are serious workload issues; plan carefully

Advance Your Career by Becoming a Consultant-Evaluator

- Experienced IRers have the necessary skills
- It’s easy to become involved and training is provided
- Provides different and valuable perspectives (Terenzini article on IR knowledge and skills)
- Can significantly enhance your standing at your institution and beyond
- There are serious workload issues; plan carefully

Resources


Resources

- http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org/
  - Background, criteria, handbook, annual meeting, etc.
- http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/nca/
  - BGSU 2003 HLC accreditation materials, including self-study, timeline, committees, links, etc.
- Contact me for copies of materials, discussion of logistics, etc.
Discussion