



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

*Ace Your Future Accreditation Review:
Focus on Student and Organizational Learning*

NASPA Annual Conference
Imagine and Explore the Future
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Ace Your Future Accreditation Review:
**Focus on Student and
Organizational Learning**

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NASPA 2005 Annual Conference
"Imagine and Explore the Future"

Learning Outcomes

- To learn more about the goals and practices of regional accreditation
- To understand what is expected of Student Affairs in the accreditation process
- To learn about successful approaches for assessing and improving student and organizational learning
- To explore a new tool for use in accreditation reviews

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**What is YOUR mental model of
accreditation?**

Mental model = Images, assumptions, and stories which we carry in our minds; cognitive mental map (Peter Senge)

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The WASC Review Process

- From outside evaluator to partnership in building institutional capacity
- From external critic to creating the framework of the learning organization
- From minimal compliance to a vision of educational effectiveness
- From accreditation as conservator of traditional values and ways of doing things to an agent for change

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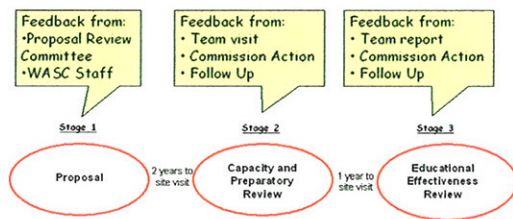
The WASC Review Process

- Based on 5 years of research and experimentation
- Shifts the mental model from compliance to institutional inquiry and engagement
- One of the best available statements of characteristics of learning-centeredness
- Based on a "quality systems" model

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The New WASC Institutional Review Process: A Learning-Centered Review Model

Institutional Learning Through Feedback



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Accreditation Reform: Similar Directions, Multiple Models

- North Central – AQIP model
- SACS – Required Quality Improvement Plans
- MSA – New Learning-centered Standards
- ACCJC (WASC) – required learning outcomes at course, program, and institutional levels

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What is required of Student Affairs to be a full partner with academic affairs in accreditation discussions?

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What is required of Student Affairs to be a full partner with academic affairs in accreditation discussions? These are observed best practices.

- Broad involvement w/in Student Affairs and comprehensive engagement with learning outcomes
- Stated goals and objectives for each SA Dept and learning outcomes for key programs and activities
- Ongoing collection of quantitative and qualitative evidence of learning & effectiveness
- Variety of methodologies used for assessment
- Program reviews, if possible, using external evaluators

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What is required of Student Affairs to be a full partner with academic affairs in accreditation discussions?

- Familiarity with the research on learning
- Satisfaction data for key services and activities used to improve services
- Active communication with opportunities to discuss and analyze results
- Active and ongoing partnerships in programs with academic affairs
- Reporting within Student Affairs and institution-wide

WISC Participation in the leadership of the steering committee



“What does he know and how long will he know it?”

The biggest obstacle to quality
—or effectiveness—
is thinking we already have it.

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Tools for the Journey

- Mental Models
- Shared Vision
- Systems Thinking
- Organizational Learning
- Personal Mastery

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Mental Models

- Learning is more than information acquisition; it is comprehensive, holistic, potentially transformative
- Research about learning shows power of active learning, feedback, integration with what students already know, diverse ways of knowing, application to student's life
- Student affairs has owned development but not learning. Learning is the new paradigm.
- Intentional, integrated learning

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Mental Models

- Pedagogies to deepen learning:
 - Undergraduate research
 - Inquiry and problem-based learning
 - Service learning
 - Applied or experiential learning
 - Portfolio learning
 - Cooperative learning
 - Smaller classes

Ferrin and Schilling

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Mental Models

- **Content and skills: Shared expertise w/ academic affairs:**
 - Identity development
 - Diversity
 - Technology
 - Values and Ethics
 - Critical thinking
 - Leadership
 - Global awareness
 - Civic literacy
 - Spirituality
 - Interpersonal relations
 - Current topical issues
- Ferrin & Schilling, Baxter Magolda

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Mental Models

- **First Year Seminars:**
- **Findings:**
 - Higher GPA
 - Higher retention and graduation rates
 - Increased participation on campus
- **Foci:**
 - Transition
 - Skills for academic and personal success
 - Special interest topics
 - Service learning

Ferrin and Schilling

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Shared Vision

- What is the vision for student affairs on your campus?
- How – in what ways -- is it shared?
- Is this an effective process of development and engagement?
- Does it lead to an authentic divisional plan with agreed-upon priorities?

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Systems Thinking

- Difference between pockets of excellent and quality systems
- Quality as a results of holistic organizational
- Is there alignment of purposes, outcomes, actions, and budget?
- Are Student Affairs outcomes or objectives mapped against programs and services?

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Organizational Learning

- Are all units contributing to improved student learning and to increased institutional effectiveness?
- Do all units have outcomes related and connected to the learning mission of the institution?
- Are all units engaged in assessment?
- Are results shared to create organizational learning and improvement?

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Personal Mastery

- Do staff feel connected to the learning mission of Student Affairs?
- Are tools continually provided to develop competencies in student and organizational learning?
- Are opportunities provided to learn and think together about the effectiveness of efforts?
- Is your Student Affairs division functioning as a learning community?

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Mental Models of Accreditation

People tend to think about accreditation within a range of mental models. The following pairs of words describe opposite ends of several such models. For each pair, mark the place between the two opposing comments that best describes how most people at your institution view accreditation.

	Mostly		Uncertain		Mostly	
Burden —Onerous tasks imposed on an institution by external authorities for the sake of regulatory agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunity —A well-designed process for my institution to make improvements <i>for its own sake</i> .
Assert & Affirm —A lengthy report, filled with glowing claims, to persuade reviewers that everything’s just fine.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Evidence-Based Analysis —A thoughtful selection of evidences to inform campus decisions about improvement.
Validation —A process intended to confirm that what an institution is already doing is quite adequate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transformation —A process leading to profound and continuing shifts in an institution’s values and vision.
Hierarchy —A top-down, mostly solitary process, driven from some remote office.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inclusion —A widely embraced plan that engages the entire campus community.
Episodic —An on-again, off-again process that starts over from zero each time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Continuous —An ongoing and embedded process that is a recognized part of the culture.
Spin —An impressive array of data and essays designed to persuade others to think well of the institution.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reflection —A process designed to enhance an institution’s capacity to think about itself.
Resource Focus —A catalog of institutional resources, based on the belief that quality is defined by the institution’s acquisition of <i>things</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outcomes Focus —A depiction of evidences of student learning, based on the belief that <i>learning-centeredness</i> defines quality.
“Mission Accomplished” —The sense that the accreditation task is over as soon as the site team leaves the campus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	“Mission Begun” —The sense that the accreditation task has framed ongoing processes that will continue to renew the campus for years to come.
Report-Writers —The sense that local accreditation leaders are selected for being good at writing reports.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change-Agents —The sense that local accreditation leaders are selected as change agents, then empowered to be such.
Compliance —A “checklist” kind of relationship with the accrediting agency—a mostly mechanical conformity to its requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engagement —A mutual and collaborative relationship with the accreditation agency—an exciting commitment to a shared vision.

ACCREDITATION REVIEW GWEN DUNGY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Your role: You have been asked to serve as a consultant to help a division of Student Affairs at a neighboring university (Gwen Dungy International University) prepare for its accreditation review. They have given you the following draft of how they propose to organize for the review (This would be in the proposal in the WASC process). Please answer the following questions:

1. Are the two proposed topics meaningful, and could they lead to consequential change and improvement?
 2. Considering these two topics, what additional approaches might GDIU include in its planning?
 3. What evidence should the University compile to deepen the investigation of these topics?
-

Goal of the accreditation process for the division of Student Affairs: To communicate and implement a learning- centered approach to campus life and student services

The specific intended outcomes we expect from our accreditation review are:

1. Processes for collaboration between Student Affairs staff and Academic Affairs staff and faculty.
2. Assessment plans that effectively identify and assess the learning outcomes that occur in Campus Life and Student Services programs.

Topic One: The collaboration of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs

Gwen Dungy International University has long been dedicated to providing a holistic undergraduate experience that promotes the development of all of our students. This commitment involves offering programs and services that help students translate their in-class learning to real-life situations, enhancing students' sense of self and well-being, fostering their interpersonal skills, increasing their comfort in working with people different from themselves, enabling them to practice their civic responsibilities, and helping them explore professional and career options. In the past, most of these efforts have been housed in the Division of Student Affairs.

Despite well-established programs to fulfill this commitment, there is a perceived disconnect among many faculty and staff with regard to the role of Student Affairs in student learning. Given the importance at GDIU of providing a well-educated workforce to the community and the joint role of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs in providing real-world, experiential learning, the inclusion of this theme in the accreditation review seems particularly germane to this self-study. That is to say, excellence in academic programs for this campus necessarily involves experiential and co-curricular learning, and Student Affairs plays a major role in facilitating the linkage between the classroom and the community.

During the development of this proposal, the Vice President of Student Affairs met with the Vice President of Academic Affairs to discuss the critical points of convergence between these divisions in the interest of student learning. The Vice President of Student Affairs continued this discussion with the division directors and their staff, and out of these discussions the following WASC hypotheses emerged:

Hypothesis 1: The University has in place the processes and institutional incentives to promote collaboration between Student Affairs staff and Academic Affairs staff and faculty to affect student learning.

At the present time, the infrastructure suggested by this hypothesis has just started to emerge. Some cross-division committees and processes exist, but there has never been a coherent understanding of how Academic Affairs and Student Affairs should be integrated, and how they should support one another in common interests. The calling together of these two divisions to co-create an expanded vision of student learning represents a new direction for this university. It seems particularly appropriate to begin this endeavor in the context of a self-study that is framed by a strategic planning approach.

Methodology:

To accomplish the goal embedded in this hypothesis an Educational Effectiveness Campus Life working group will be established. The group will include an Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, an Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Director of Residence Life, the Director of Student Activities, the Director of the Office of Community Collaboration, the faculty coordinator of Freshman Seminars, the faculty coordinator of Learning Communities, representatives from the Enrollment Management Committee, the Director of General Education, a representative from the Faculty Senate, and student representatives from Associated Students, Inc.

This group will identify existing structures, propose additional infrastructures, and evaluate the efficacy of those structures that already exist. It is expected that this work will lead to greater clarity in understanding the collaboration needed between the two divisions in order to educate the whole student.

Topic Two: The Assessment of Student Affairs Programs and Units

As with most universities, the outcomes assessment paradigm at GDIU has focused almost exclusively on academic programs in the Division of Academic Affairs. While some units within Student Affairs have chosen to evaluate their programs, there has been no coherent assessment structure for this division, and there has not been institutional support for such a structure. The addition of this process would not only provide valuable feedback for the staff and faculty who administer Student Affairs programs, it would also help the division focus more deliberately on student learning, and it would provide more credibility for the division in demonstrating their role in student growth and learning.

Hypothesis 2: Student Affairs has assessment plans that identify and assess the learning outcomes that occur in co-curricular and experiential learning programs.

Methodology:

To accomplish the intended outcome of a well-articulated Student Affairs assessment process, a Campus Life working group will be formed for this hypothesis and will be composed of representatives from each unit of Student Affairs and also the Academic Affairs Assessment Coordinator. This group will identify the existing assessment processes in Student Affairs and evaluate their current work. It is expected that this work will codify an assessment process for the Division of Student Affairs. This process will also provide the Vice President of Student Affairs with a mechanism for reporting department level assessment trends to the University Planning and Budgeting Council as suggestions for planning objectives and will consider how to communicate the results of the assessment to the wider campus

Adapted with permission from CSU, Sacramento Proposal for Accreditation Review

NASPA Annual Conference 2005

Sample Format 7.2

Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators* Student Affairs and Academic Support Units

Student Affairs and Academic Support Units (list)	Have learning outcomes or performance indicators been developed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	How are these made known?	What measures/ indicators are used to determine student learning and/or program effectiveness?	If this unit has undergone unit review, indicate date of last available report
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
4.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
5.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
6.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
7.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
8.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
9.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

*Departments and programs may have service or providing information as outcomes. This table may be adapted to include performance measures as well as student learning outcomes as indicators of educational effectiveness.

7. 2 Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators for Student Affairs and Academic Support Units

Why is WASC Interested in Data of This Kind? The indicators asked for in this table provide evidence of how a division of Student Affairs develops quality assurance activities that ensure and improve student learning in areas outside of the classroom. This table is required for the Capacity and Preparatory Review to indicate how the institution is organizing its out-of-classroom programs to align with academic goals and programs and overall institutional mission and purposes. The visiting team may wish to sample from some of the organizational activities or units listed to understand how systematically and comprehensively the institution is addressing its support for student learning across the institution. For example, institutions are expected to regularly identify student needs and experiences in planning for a learning-centered environment (CFR 2.10). The institution is also expected to develop and implement co-curricular programs, consistent with its purposes, that are integrated with academic goals and programs (CFR 2.11) and it is expected to review these programs, including analyses of the achievement of learning outcomes (CFR 2.7).

Issues and Challenges. Not all institutions have yet established learning objectives for its student affairs and academic support units and not all institutions conduct program reviews for any but academic programs. The Accrediting Commission has developed increasingly high expectations for institutions to develop capacity for learning-centeredness, and these expectations are not limited to the faculty and curriculum, but extend to programs and activities outside of the classroom. It is critical for an institution to be explicit about its expectations for student learning across the institution and to have structures and processes in place to assure that every unit contributes to the evidence-based, participatory discussions about how effectively the institution is accomplishing its purposes and achieving its educational objectives. Some measures and indicators are embedded in organizational units and programs and may be difficult to list distinctly and individually in a table format. Other departments and programs are organized to provide services or information to students and, while they may not promote conceptual discovery, nonetheless teach a variety of principles through the service they provide. Consequently, Table 7.2 may be modified to adapt to units or programs within Student Affairs as appropriate; for example, some units may be organized around “indicators of performance effectiveness” and others around “student learning results.” This table may also be supplemented with a narrative to communicate indicators more effectively.

Data Element 7.2 – Educational Effectiveness Indicators for Student Affairs and Academic Support Units

Description. This data table requests brief narrative information on specific quality assurance activities undertaken by the institution at the time of completion of the table. The following information is requested for student affairs and academic support units: 1) whether formal learning outcomes have been developed (may be answered yes/no); 2) where the learning outcomes are listed (include program announcements, catalogs, student handbooks, and other publications as applicable); 3) the measures or indicators used to assess student learning or performance effectiveness (examples include skills testing; focus group summaries; observation/evaluations; student self reports in surveys; non-obtrusive measures; student, alumni, and employer surveys; portfolio review; etc.); and 4) the date of the last program or department review (presumably this review will have produced a report that the team may read).

A sample format designed to address this requirement follows.

**Ace Your Future Accreditation Review:
Focus on Student and Organizational Learning**

Tools for the Journey											
Mental Models	What is the mental model used in your division of Student Affairs? (Describe or give an analogy)										
Shared Vision	<p style="text-align: center;">Rate the extent to which this vision is shared:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">Not shared; People act Individually</td> <td style="width: 20%;"></td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">Somewhat shared</td> <td style="width: 20%;"></td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">Fully shared; Strong Communication</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> </tr> </table>	Not shared; People act Individually		Somewhat shared		Fully shared; Strong Communication	1	2	3	4	5
Not shared; People act Individually		Somewhat shared		Fully shared; Strong Communication							
1	2	3	4	5							
Systems Thinking	Give an example of how systems thinking may be deployed in your division:										
Organizational Learning	Give an example of how your division may act as a learning organization:										
Personal Mastery	How strong are your skills and abilities in advancing the learning organization model and mission at your campus?										