

Co-Creating a New Future for Assessment and Accreditation

Ralph A. Wolff, Former President
Senior College Commission, WASC

Why Focus on Accreditation?

- Accreditation has been the chief impetus for assessment
- Accrediting agencies create a framework for institutional reviews through their **standards**
- The **process** of accreditation visits also command institutional attention

Challenges To Accreditation Are Significant

- Senate and NACIQI hearings
- Employer surveys
- Studies of college graduates
- Complaints from within that the process is too costly and burdensome
- Concern that innovation is stifled

Assessment Institute 10-14

3

Will Recent Changes Make Fundamental Differences?

- SACS – QEP
- HLC – New Pathways
- WASC Senior – 5 Core Competencies

“We only can do what our institutions will support.”

Assessment Institute 10-14

4

© Cartoonbank.com



“These new regulations will fundamentally change the way we get around them.”

Assessment Institute 10-14 5

The cartoon depicts two men in business attire sitting at a conference table in an office. The man on the left is looking at a document, while the man on the right is speaking. On the table are several documents, a laptop, and a calculator. In the background, there is a whiteboard with some scribbles, a desk with a lamp, and a window. The cartoon is signed 'KVEY' in the bottom right corner.

A Process Designed in the 60's



Assessment Institute 10-14 6

A photograph of a classic black 1960s Ford Mustang coupe parked on a gravel driveway. The car is shown from a front-three-quarter view, highlighting its distinctive grille, headlights, and sleek body lines. In the background, there is a residential house with a lawn and trees.

How Could Accreditation Be Creative, Collaborative and About What Really Matters?



Assessment Institute 10-14

7

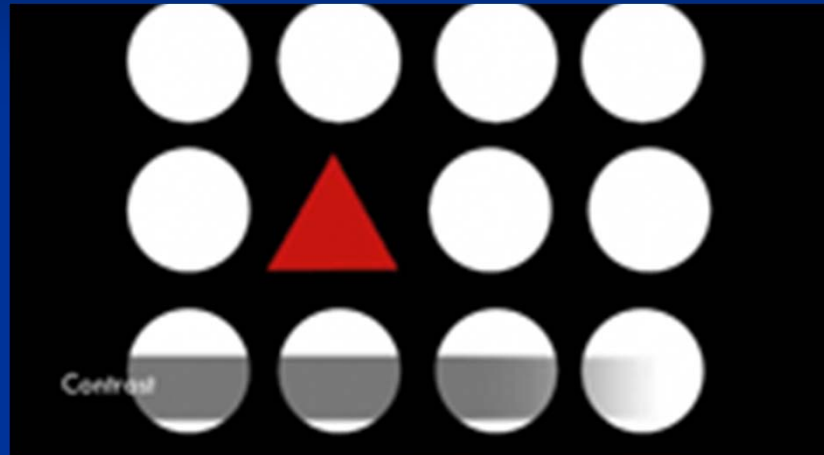
What if the Student Experience and Student Learning Were the **Center Point** of Accreditation?



Assessment Institute 10-14

8

Rather Than Assessment Being One of Many Standards?



Assessment Institute 10-14

9

Isn't It Time To Rethink Accreditation and Its Relationship To Assessment?

- Are there not some common learning outcomes expected of all of today's graduates?
- Has mission-centeredness gone too far?
- Can meaningful evaluations/culture change be achieved without explosions of activity followed by a team on campus for 2-3 days -- every 10 years?

Assessment Institute 10-14

10

What If The Self-Study Were Transformed?



Assessment Institute 10-14

11

And Endless Documentation Were Eliminated?



Assessment Institute 10-14

12

Instead of a Self Study: What If?

- Agency co-designed surveys were sent to faculty, students and staff & analyzed by a third-party
- Institutional e-Portfolios were developed based on existing learning results with reflective essays on learning and completion results, with benchmarking to assure high levels of performance
- Resource and structural issues were addressed separately – off-site if possible

Assessment Institute 10-14

13

What If Peer Review Were Redefined??

- Several institutions worked collaboratively with common inquiries on student learning achievement (Similar to cross-institutional Tuning?)
- Teams included representatives from within the collaborative
- Up to 10% of institutions could cross regional boundaries and work with peers

Assessment Institute 10-14

14

What If Visits Crammed With Interviews Instead Became Learning Results Seminars?



Assessment Institute 10-14

15

What If There Were A New Approach To Team Visits?

- Learning-centered questions are developed
- One focus is on the demonstration of core competencies of all graduates
- Samples of student work, syllabi and assignments were reviewed
- Departmental audits were conducted
- **Students serve on teams using methods they design**

Assessment Institute 10-14

16

What If There Were Transparency About Performance?

- All documents became public - with comments
- Scored rubrics were publicly posted on institutional learning demonstrations
- Promising practices were publicly highlighted
- Iterative engagement were the norm rather than decennial bursts of energy

Assessment Institute 10-14

17

We Need You To Be Involved

- Accreditation's role in assessment is too important to be left only to presidents
- Faculty, staff and student voices need to be invited into a redesign process
- New models of evaluation need to be developed
- Add your ideas to mine and make them better

Assessment Institute 10-14

18

**“Until one is committed, there is
hesitancy....Whatever you can do or
dream you can, begin it. Boldness has
genius, power and magic in it. Begin it
now.”**

William Hutchison Murray

Contact me at ralphwolff@gmail.com