

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.

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

You Already Are Involved

- IR typically provides information to support accreditation in the areas of demographics (students and employees); enrollments and enrollment trends; faculty, staff, and student qualifications; financial aid; instructional cost and productivity; grade distributions; libraries and IT; programs of study and degrees conferred; athletics; special studies conducted; etc.

You Already Are 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.

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

- 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
- Its 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

- Knight, W. E. (Ed.). (2003). *A primer for institutional research (rev. ed.)*. Tallahassee, FL: The Association for Institutional Research. (see <http://www.airweb.org>)
- Terenzini, P. T. (1993). On the nature of institutional research and the knowledge and skills it requires. *Research in Higher Education* 34(1): 1-10.

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