

in this issue >>>

Issue  
**TWO**

SACSCOC 101

QEP Corner

What makes a winning QEP?

From the standards...

Assessment Standards



April 2020

# SACSCOC and Me

timeline >>>

*May 2020*

**Compliance Report** – Off-site review of Compliance Certification - May 28-29

*June*

**Compliance Report** – Receive report from off-site review. Advisory visit (June 23-24) with SACSCOC Vice President.  
**QEP** - Complete draft presentation to share with SACSCOC Vice President.

*July-August 2020*

**Compliance Report** – Respond to off-site recommendations in Focused Report  
**QEP** –Finalize QEP document.

*September 2020*

Submit Focused Report and QEP to on-site committee for review.

*October 2020*

On-site visit – October 26-29

## SACSCOC 101

### *The Basics of Reaffirmation*

We love jargon in many areas of our lives and certainly in the field of education. In these newsletters, a number of terms are used regarding the activities surrounding our SACSCOC reaffirmation. The goal of this column will answer the questions that perhaps you were afraid to ask.

#### **What is the Compliance Report?**

SACSCOC maintains 58 Principles of Accreditation with which member institutions must demonstrate compliance. Only 2 standards do not apply to NCC. The Compliance Report contains our narrative responses with supporting documentation to those standards.

#### **What is the Off-Site Review?**

A team of reviewers individually evaluate the report that we submitted and then communicate electronically to make a determination of compliance on each standard. Typically, the team meets together in Atlanta to make a final decision on compliance. Under the current circumstances, this meeting might be completely virtual.

#### **What is the Focused Report?**

For each standard that the off-site committee finds NCC non-compliant, additional narrative and supporting documentation of the College's compliance can be provided. In other words, the Focused Report is a “do-over”

to allow us another chance to show compliance with the Principles of Accreditation. This might include documentation that was omitted in the Compliance Report or new documentation showing ways in which we have improved since the Compliance Report was submitted.

#### **What is the On-Site Visit?**

A team of reviewers comes to our campus to finalize the determination of our compliance with the Principles of Accreditation. Prior to their visit, they review our Focused Report and QEP. The visit allows them to interview faculty, staff, and administrators if necessary and to hear us present on the Quality Enhancement Plan. We receive a final report from them of compliance or non-compliance with the Principles.

#### **Who are the reviewers?**

Reviewers are professionals from other SACSCOC institutions who are nominated for participation by their institution. They will all be from outside of NC. Both on-site and off-site teams have representatives from different campus disciplines – institutional effectiveness, instruction, student services, library, finance, and even a president. Lisa, Amy, Jonathan, and Deana are all examples from our campus of past SACSCOC reviewers. ◇

## QEP Corner >>> *And the winner is...*

In February, the QEP Marketing Team launched a logo contest for our Success Network. Students, graduates, and team Nash members were encouraged to participate. Advertising and Graphic Design student Joshua Edwards submitted the winning entry and will receive \$150. The Marketing Team was pleased with the winning entry for its simplicity and appeal. According to Edwards, “coaching is often a way of empowering people, which is why I chose to incorporate a power symbol as a representation of that element. I also found that a bold, powerful font worked best for the main body of the logo to further the idea of success, the primary goal of the program.”



Joshua Edwards, NCC student logo contest winner

*“It was a lot of fun designing it, and it is a real honor to have been chosen. I am grateful for the opportunity to have done so.”*

## Expectations >>>

## *What makes a winning QEP?*

*The true test of a winning Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is the positive impact it has on our students. It answers those two important questions (Is it good for the institution? Is it good for our students?) with a resounding YES!*

The primary charge of the visiting SACSCOC on-site team is to evaluate our QEP. What are they looking for? Are they inspectors deploying a magnifying glass to discover flaws? Will random team members or students be stopped and given a QEP pop quiz? The magic QEP 8-ball says, “very doubtful.” In my experience, the visiting team wants the College’s QEP to be a resounding success. To that end, they are asked to consider five ingredients SACSCOC has identified that makes a winning combination.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Ingredient – Topic**

A winning QEP comes from a topic selected from an on-going and comprehensive planning process. In 2017 (yes that long ago we started this deliberate and methodical process), the QEP Topic discovery team analyzed strategic planning and program review documents, institutional reports, external research survey results and conducted surveys and focus groups with NCC students and team

members to identify a need to improve student learning or success.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Ingredient – Broad-based Support**

The next winning ingredient is involvement and support from multiple perspectives. This is not a top-down directive, but a grassroots effort of Team Nash. Two NCC teams (topic discovery & development) with student representation have been leading the process. Focus groups and subsequent listening tours involved all of Team Nash and students. All Team Nash were invited to contribute research to the proposal by conducting model and literature reviews.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Ingredient – Student Outcomes**

Here the plan identifies meaningful outcomes to impact student learning and/or success. This is where the details of the plan to achieve those outcomes are developed. The vision of the Success Network is to connect students with services and resources to support their success through the guidance and

mentorship of a Success Coach from application to graduation. Success outcomes are based on connection, persistence, progression, and completion.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Ingredient – Commitment**

We can all dream, but here NCC must demonstrate it can make the QEP a reality. Resources must be committed in terms of budget, personnel, structure, technology, and facilities to deliver on outcomes. At present, the QEP Development team has presented its recommendations for these necessary resources.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Ingredient - Assessment**

Commitment of resources and assessment, our final winning ingredient, is where most on-site teams invest significant deliberation. A solid assessment plan tells us ultimately if our QEP made an impact. As it is on-going, assessment allows NCC to adjust the QEP to keep making progress. At present, the QEP Development team will identify a cohort of students to track and compare against baseline data and target outcomes.

### *Section 7: Institutional Planning and Effectiveness*

***“Effective institutions demonstrate a commitment to principles of continuous improvement, based on a systematic and documented process of assessing institutional performance with respect to mission in all aspects of the institution.”***

7.1 – The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission.

7.2 – The institution has a QEP that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement.

7.3 – The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.

### *Section 8: Student Achievement*

***“Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support student learning outcomes for its educational programs. To meet the goals of educational programs, an institution provides appropriate academic and student services to support student success.”***

8.1 – The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution’s mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.

8.2 – The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

- a. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs
- b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs
- c. Academic and student services that support student success

# Assessment Standards

## *Do program and service reviews really matter?*

The Principles of Accreditation cover a variety of college functions including finance, governing board, library, administration/organization, faculty, and student support services. Two categories will be highlighted in this column: *Institutional Planning and Effectiveness* and *Student Achievement*. The standards in these 2 categories impact everyone on campus and are among the most frequently cited standards for non-compliance at all levels of review (4 of the top 8 off-site; 5 of the top 6 on-site; 5 of the top 6 at the SACSCOC Board review). **More than half** of institutions are found non-compliant off-site, and **a third** of institutions are non-compliant on-site with at least one IE standard.

### **What are the expectations?**

There are several key themes to the institutional effectiveness standards that are good practice for all programs and services to follow. Common elements of these standards include the following:

- **Identify** expected outcomes
- **Assess** achievement
- **Seek improvement**

All academic programs, student services, and administrative areas should have **identified** outcomes to evaluate. The second part is critical as well – **assessing** the extent to which those outcomes were obtained. This might be through a survey, class assignment, audit, count of students served – the methods are numerous. Assessment should include on-campus, off-

campus, online, dual enrolled, etc. – all aspects of a course or service. Once the assessment has been completed, the results should be **analyzed** and discussed by those involved to develop **plans for improvement**. If no efforts are made to improve the outcomes, the assessment itself was pointless.

### **What if no improvement is needed?**

If you assess an outcome for multiple years and the results are so high that there is no room for improvement, identify a new outcome.

### **We only think about this once a year, right?**

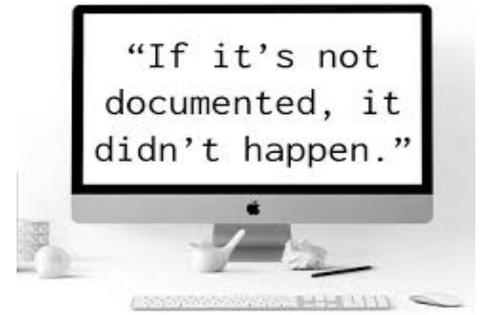
Assessment of outcomes and improvement efforts should be a year-round endeavor of all programs and services. After plans for improvement are developed, those plans should be **implemented** and revised if necessary throughout the year. Remember to **document** your progress to demonstrate your efforts at continuous improvement.

### **Shouldn't my supervisor do this?**

Everyone involved with a program or service should play a part in the assessment. Those who are teaching or serving students are the most important to be involved as they will be the ones carrying out plans for improvement.

### **Once SACSCOC is gone, can we stop assessment until the next visit?**

No! Assessing student learning and service effectiveness should be ongoing year after year, regardless of the reaffirmation cycle. ☀



## *On Success...*

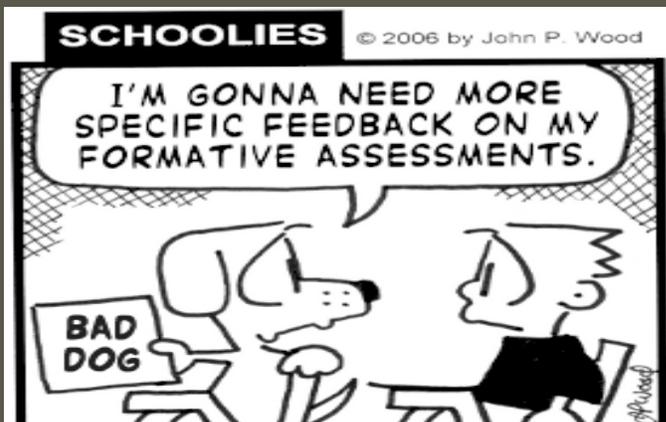
*To succeed in life, you need three things:  
a wishbone, a backbone,  
and a funny bone*

*--Reba McEntire*

## *Off-site Delay*

As noted in the timeline, the off-site review, originally scheduled for mid-April, has been delayed until the end of May. This means that we will have less time to develop a Focused Report to address any areas of non-compliance. Keep working now on any areas of needed improvement so we will be ready to respond! 😊

## *final thoughts...*



*coming soon >>>*

## *In The Next Issue*

*QEP Rollout Timeline*

*QEP Highlight on Assessment  
& Student Success Outcomes*

*Spotlight on...Academic and  
Student Support Services*

*Thinking like a reviewer*