

Establishing A Statewide Accreditation Knowledge Network (VRAS)

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Online Resources

Resources for this concurrent session will be online at
http://www.jmu.edu/sacscoc/Presentation_SACSCOC2018VRAS.shtml

Presenters' Contact Information

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Session Description

The VRAS (Virginia Regional Accreditation Symposium) was created to establish a network of accreditation colleagues in Virginia. Since 2012, VRAS held an annual meeting to bring together Virginia accreditation professionals to network and discuss SACSCOC topics within the state framework. This session will 1) reveal the steps involved in creating and maintaining the VRAS, 2) provide participants with considerations for how to establish a similar network in their own state/locality, 3) discuss how the VRAS has helped to change the accreditation approach for some colleagues in Virginia and its plans for the future. The session will be interactive and include an active learning segment.

Rationale and Relevance of the Topic

SACSCOC is a body of peers and it is through our peers that we hold ourselves accountable and gain valuable knowledge. Robust state knowledge networks on accreditation standards, policies, and related practices enhance the quality of our work and encourage camaraderie among participants. The VRAS was created to build this network in the state of Virginia.

The purposes of the VRAS are to:

1. Build relationships among faculty and staff responsible for compliance with SACSCOC policies and principles.
2. Provide resources for faculty and staff that deal with the intersection of state recognition and regional accreditation.
3. Serve as a forum for discussion about salient accreditation-related issues and how they affect Virginia institutions.
4. Share accreditation-related knowledge and experiences among Virginia institutions that may serve as an example or guidance to colleagues.
5. Welcome, engage, and mentor new members from within our own and other accredited institutions within the Commonwealth to share knowledge and ensure the future growth of the VRAS.

Organization of the Session

The session will include presentation of the development of the VRAS and the next steps in its evolution; followed by an active learning session for participants to plan first steps for their state and report out to the group. (Will include time for a Question/Answer session at the end.)

Development of the VRAS (15 minutes):

- ▶ How VRAS was established, how it became an annual event
- ▶ Logistics of annual event, both agenda (how agenda is decided, panelists recruited) and site (location, lodging, registration, funding)
- ▶ Mission, Vision, Purpose statement development

Next Steps/Future of the VRAS (15 minutes):

- ▶ Assessment results from previous annual meetings
- ▶ Building the group into a non-profit (mission, vision, purpose statements, creating by-laws)
- ▶ More offerings: Spring workshops

Creating Networks in Other States (15 minutes):

- ▶ Discuss how the VRAS has helped to change the accreditation approach for some colleagues in Virginia
- ▶ Provide participants with considerations for how to establish a similar network in their own state/locality
- ▶ Participants' networking and planning - participants will be seated by state so they can meet others from their state who may be interested in developing a Statewide Accreditation Knowledge Network in their area

Participant Learning Outcomes

- ▶ The benefits of creating/having a statewide (or state regional) network of colleagues involved in the accreditation process
- ▶ Strategies for developing an inter-organizational infrastructure to sustain the network
- ▶ Strategies for planning and evaluating structured, annual events for knowledge sharing
- ▶ Decision points and approaches to recruiting institutions of higher education to join a network
- ▶ Participants will be provided with sample surveys, agendas, and planning tools to help create their own event
- ▶ Participants will be asked to sit at tables assigned by state (or representing states) to facilitate networking during the active learning segment. Each group (by state) will engage in activities designed to produce preliminary plans for creating in-state knowledge networks.

Presenters' Bios

▶ Linda Birtley, Virginia Commonwealth University

- ▶ Dr. Linda Birtley currently serves as the Director for Academic Program Review and Accreditation and as one of the university's liaisons with the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia at Virginia Commonwealth University. In this capacity she works closely with faculty, assistant deans, and associate deans in academic programming. She has been an integral part of the leadership team planning and executing the university's response for the fifth year and tenth year compliance reviews. She also served as one of the lead planners for the Virginia Regional Accreditation Symposium, a statewide accreditation knowledge network, for two years and is currently on the planning board.

▶ Cindy Chiarello, James Madison University

- ▶ Cindy Chiarello currently serves as the coordinator for Strategic Planning and Engagement and as the SACSCOC Liaison Assistant at James Madison University. She supports departments, committees, and individuals involved with the university planning process, including demonstrating how each unit contributes to the university's mission and telling the story of engagement at James Madison University. For the past five years, Cindy has served on an accreditation team whose purpose is to keep the university current with SACSCOC accreditation standards and submit all required documents to SACSCOC, including an upcoming Fifth-Year Interim Report and a Compliance Certification in 2013 which received no recommendations. Cindy served as the Chair of the Virginia Regional Accreditation Symposium in 2013 and 2017.

▶ Geoffrey Klein, Christopher Newport University

- ▶ Dr. Geoffrey Klein currently serves as the Vice Provost for Research, Graduate Studies and Assessment at Christopher Newport University. In this role, he works collaboratively with several university offices to provide resources for faculty and students to pursue research opportunities and measure student learning across all programs, including the Liberal Learning Core Curriculum. Geoffrey also serves as Christopher Newport's accreditation liaison. Over the past five years, he led efforts to successfully complete the fifth-year interim report process, conducted a readiness audit for the decennial review, and employed an effective internal review process for the development of the Compliance Certification that led to reaffirmation with no monitoring. He has also served as a SACSCOC reviewer.