Steadying the Ship – Keeping the Reaffirmation Process Moving in a Period of Significant Change
SACSCOC Annual Meeting
December 7–10, 2019

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Associate Provost and QEP Director (former)

Learning Outcomes

Participants will:
• Learn how to create a framework for stability during the reaffirmation process.
• Gain awareness of potential hazards and difficulties during the reaffirmation process.
• Gain insight on how to manage change during the reaffirmation process.

Marymount at a Glance

- Independent, non-profit
- Located in Arlington, Virginia (6 miles from Washington D.C.)
- Founded in 1950 by Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary (RSHM)
- 2,287 undergraduates and 1,131 graduates
- Diverse: 43 states and 68 countries
- 67% female; 33% male
- 21% international
- 70% commuter
Marymount’s Mission

Marymount is a comprehensive Catholic university, guided by the traditions of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, that emphasizes intellectual curiosity, service to others, and a global perspective. A Marymount education is grounded in the liberal arts, promotes career preparation, and provides opportunities for personal and professional growth. A student-centered learning community that values diversity and focuses on the education of the whole person, Marymount guides the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual development of each individual.

Significant Changes and Campus Implications

SACSCOC Reaffirmation

Timeframe
2017:
• September: Compliance report due
2018:
• Focused Report due
• QEP due
• February/March: On-site visit
• December 2018: reaffirmation approval
Significant Changes

Who is minding the store?

2015:
• AVPAA position was vacated; filled summer 2015

2016:
• Sitting provost announced resignation; internal interim provost appointed
• New dean, School of Arts and Science (Fall)

2017:
• New provost
• New dean, School of Business Administration
• University president announced resignation
  – active and engaged throughout the entire process

2018:
• Marymount’s seventh president starts

Implications to Campus

• Confusion across campus
• Lack of continuity in the process and in the messaging
• Constant interruption
• Opportunity for change in QEP direction late in the process

SACSCOC liaison, Reaccreditation Chair, QEP Director, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness staff, QEP Co-Chairs, and other committed staff continued to steady the ship throughout the changes and into the first year of the QEP, Empowering Students for Service.

Managing Leadership Change during the Reaffirmation Process
### Managing Change: Strategic Elements

**Structure**
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Incentives

### Managing Change: First Steps

**Compliance Certification**
- Team Charge
- Compliance team identified
- Timeline built

**QEP**
- QEP Director starts
- Builds QEP Team and timeline
- Team Charge
- 4 proposals in draft stage
  (ended up with 6; chose 1 to finalize)

### Managing Change: Structure

**Compliance Certification**
- Binder:
  - SACSCOC Reaccreditation Committee members
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Initial timeline
  - SACSCOC Core Requirements and Standards
  - Details for each member
  - Meeting notes
  - SACSCOC Compliance Specialist

**QEP**
- Build Development Team with faculty and staff Co-chairs:
  - Subcommittees:
    - Writing
    - Background and Context
    - Assessment
    - Engagement
  - Co-chairs for each
  - Implementation Team - a year away

**Representation from across the university**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managing Change: Onboarding</th>
<th>2015 →16</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance Certification</td>
<td>QEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual briefings with new dean</td>
<td>• QEP Development Team biweekly meetings; updates from each group</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Informing interim provost</td>
<td>• Student focus groups: ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Peer to peer/dean to dean meetings (weekly)</td>
<td>• Faculty &amp; Staff lunches</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Extended cabinet updates</td>
<td>• Draft to new provost; feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Regular meetings with president (senior leadership team)</td>
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**Compliance chair and QEP director had to tag team at times**

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<tr>
<td>• Regular meetings with president (senior leadership team)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Faculty Council governance updates - ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• SACSCOC Leadership Team present to Board of Trustees</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Extended cabinet updates ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Compliance Team drafting</td>
<td>• QEP Development Team biweekly meetings - ongoing</td>
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<td>• Presidential updates (email)</td>
<td>• Student Government involved</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ongoing campus-wide communications (as stated)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Compliance Team met and had a draft review: ‘hole’ or information lacking</td>
<td>• Access to <a href="mailto:qep@marymount.edu">qep@marymount.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>• SACSCOC liaison &amp; Senior Compliance Team worked to find information and what to communicate</td>
<td>• School discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>‒ Missing syllabi – go directly to Deans and schools</td>
<td>• Student focus groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>‒ Cabinet</td>
<td>• Draft versions posted for review for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‒ Student Affairs</td>
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Managing Change: Incentives

Compliance Certification
- Incentives for SACSCOC team:
  - Four members
  - Course releases (faculty)
  - Financial stipends (fall, spring, and summer, as needed)

QEP
- Incentives for QEP Co-Chairs
  - Course releases (faculty)
  - Financial stipends (fall, spring, and summer, as needed)
  - Both options used at busy times

Recognize effort beyond normal university service

Managing Change: Keeping the Ship Sailing

Compliance Certification
- Compliance Team continues to meet and review draft
- On-site meeting with SACSCOC Vice President
  - Address feedback
- Ongoing SACSCOC liaison & Senior Compliance Team worked to find information and what to communicate

QEP
- QEP Team writing document (draft available)
- On-site meeting with SACSCOC Vice President
  - Address feedback

Managing Change: Keeping the Ship Sailing

Compliance Certification
- Monthly meetings with president
  - 1-2 major compliance requests; deadline approaching
  - Convince the president to say "I will email..."
  - Go directly to person
  - Successful tactic

QEP
- Monthly meetings with president
  - General update
  - Address concerns

Use strategically, but judicially, or will cease to be effective
Managing Change: Keeping the Ship Sailing

Compliance Certification
- Final draft:
  - Internal people read components, but not engaged in the reaffirmation process, but new SACSOC requirement
  - In-house editor (English professor) proofed documents
- Delivered Fall 2017

Leverage in-house resources and external reviews for continued feedback and validation

QEP
- Draft sent to external reviewer
  - Edits/changes addressed then
- Draft sent to external editor
- Final draft sent to agency for publication
- Delivered Spring 2018

Managing Change: Celebrate

2017-18

Successful reaffirmation; Dr. Shank’s email to the Marymount community:
“...I am extremely pleased to report that earlier this morning we learned that Marymount has met all the standards for reaffirmation and substantive changes with no recommendations. Additionally, our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Empowering Students for Service, has been fully accepted.”

Celebrate and publicly acknowledge teams throughout the process

Critical Success Factors
Success Factors

- Build a small, strong core team
- Rely on core team
- Hard workers and passionate
- Empowered by president and provost; hands-off unless needed
- Train the leadership team when to step in and not to overstep during the process
- Be Strategic
  - Well defined structures, roles, and responsibilities – early in process
  - Focus on specific areas as you move through the process; not everything all at once; take small steps
- Communicate at all levels
  - Have one-on-one onboarding meetings as new administration starts
  - Campus wide
  - Open communication channels (email, website, open door)
- Incentivize and Celebrate

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Questions and Answers