Focusing on the Focused Report:
A ‘New Opportunity’ to Demonstrate Compliance

Objectives
Participants will
✓ Understand the purpose of the Focused Report and the advantages of submitting one
✓ Understand reasons for non-compliance ratings given by Off-Site Committees
✓ Know how to develop well-written, appropriately-documented, and FOCUSED responses that satisfactorily address ratings of non-compliance
Attendees: Where are you in the Reaffirmation process?
❖ Between Off Site Review and On Site Review—writing or preparing to write a Focused Report
❖ Drafting/Writing Compliance Certification
❖ Planning/organizing for upcoming Reaffirmation process

Purpose of the Focused Report
❖ Optional report written after the Off Site Review & before the On Site Review
❖ The Focused Report gives institutions a second opportunity to make its case for compliance
❖ The Focused Report should focus only on those standards that are marked as non compliant

Principles Most Frequently Marked as Non Compliant
Most Frequently Cited Principles

➢ 6.2.a Faculty Qualifications
➢ 8.2.a Student Outcomes – Educational Programs
➢ 8.2.b Student Outcomes – Gen Ed
➢ 8.2.c Student Outcomes – Academic and Student Services
➢ 13.2* Financial Documents
➢ 6.1* Full-time Faculty

Responsibilities of the On Site Reaffirmation Committee

- Confirm, in person, compliance with designated principles (marked with an asterisk)
- Determine compliance for principles deemed not in compliance by the Off Site Reaffirmation Committee
- Evaluate the acceptability of the QEP

Audience for the Focused Report

On Site Reaffirmation Committee Members are committed to

- Open-mindedness
- Objectivity
The On Site Reaffirmation Committee will judge compliance based on the:

- Institution’s Compliance Certification
- Off Site Committee’s Report
- Institution’s Focused Report
- Institution’s QEP
- Interviews conducted & documents examined during the On Site visit

The Focused Report:

A ‘New Opportunity’ to Demonstrate Compliance

Focused Report: Ineffective Responses

- Repeating or quoting text from the original Compliance Certification
- Arguing with the Off Site Reaffirmation Committee’s findings
Focused Report: Effective Responses
❖ Providing clearer, more detailed explanations
❖ Supplying additional, updated, or new information and/or documentation
❖ Elaborating

Preparing to Write
❖ Be certain you understand the reason for each negative rating from the Off Site Review Team
❖ Be objective; reread the pertinent section from your original report from the standpoint of someone who knows nothing about your institution

Reasons for Non-Compliance Ratings
Common Reasons for Noncompliance

1. Failure to adhere to the standard or requirement
2. No evidence of clear policy and/or procedure
3. Confusing or contradictory information submitted
4. Failure to address all components of a standard
5. Insufficient or unconvincing documentation of compliance

Failure to Adhere to a Standard or Requirement

Example of an Off Site Committee Finding:
❖ University policy does not ensure that students complete 25% of the required credit hours for the undergraduate degree at the institution (9.4)

No Evidence of Clear Policy or Procedure

Example:
6.3 Faculty Evaluation
Applies to Full-time and Part-Time, Permanent as well as Temporary, Faculty
Confusing or Contradictory Information Presented

Examples:
- Degree Programs
- Information on Facilities (Number of Residence Halls, Off-Site Locations, etc.)
- Organizational Chart

Failure to Address All Components of a Standard

Example:
13.2 The member institution provides the following financial statements: (a) an institutional audit for the most recent fiscal year . . . (b) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets . . . and (c) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal proceedings, and is approved by the governing board.

Insufficient or Unconvincing Documentation

Example:
4.2.c The governing board selects and regularly evaluates the institution’s chief executive officer.

Documentation that might be provided:
- Board By-laws showing Board’s authority to select CEO
- Board minutes showing selection of current CEO
- Summary of process for and frequency of CEO evaluation
- Copy of most recent evaluations or Board minutes documenting evaluations
Insufficient or Unconvincing Documentation

Example:
Off-Site Team Comment on Comprehensive Standard 5.2.c:
The University has not presented convincing evidence that the President has ultimate responsibility for and exercises appropriate control over intercollegiate athletics.

Documentation that might be presented:
✓ Organizational Chart
✓ Entries from President’s Calendar showing meetings with Athletics Director, FAR, etc.
✓ Minutes from meetings with Athletics Director, FAR, Coaches

Insufficient or Unconvincing Documentation

7.3 Administrative Effectiveness
8.2.a Student Outcomes: Educational Programs
8.2.b Student Outcomes: General Education
8.2.c Student Outcomes: Academic & Student Services

Typical Problems:
• Institution provides samples but does not explain how they present a valid cross section of programs
• Institution describes assessment measures and results but does not identify goals/targets or changes made to effect improvement
• Institution provides dated data

Insufficient or Unconvincing Documentation

6.2.a Qualifications of faculty members

6.2.b Sufficient number of full-time faculty to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review
Insufficient or Unconvincing Documentation

6.2.b Sufficient Number of FT Faculty
Problems:
• Percentage of credit hours taught by FT faculty is not disaggregated by program
• Inadequate description of faculty responsibilities (i.e., include expectations for advising, scholarship & service as well as teaching load)
• Inadequate evidence that FT faculty are able to meet scholarship & service expectations

Summary
❖ Keep the report FOCUSED. Address only those standards identified by the Off Site Committee as non-compliant and only those parts of the standard that were not satisfactorily addressed in the original Compliance Report.
❖ Be concise, but detailed. The response to each non-compliant principle should be no more than 3 pages.
❖ REMEMBER YOUR AUDIENCE.

Questions?
Comments?
ozmentsuzanne@gmail.com
205-601-1055