Hosting a Reaffirmation Visit with No Experience: A Career Hosting Rock Concerts Helped

Dr. Paul Fowler
Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation Liaison
Louisiana State University at Eunice
Website: www.lsue.edu/ie
pfowler@lsue.edu
Session CS – 159

How many of you
• are new to accreditation?
• are an off-site reviewer?
• are an on-site reviewer?
• have a Tenth-Year Reaffirmation Site Visit coming up shortly (within a year or so)?
• are wondering about the connection between hosting concerts and a SACSCOC site visit?

My Background
• The University of Akron (Akron, OH)
  – 1988-2004: Senior Lecturer, Developmental Mathematics, University College
• Canton Palace Theatre Association (Canton, OH)
  – 1990-2004: Technical Director
  – 1984-1989: Building Superintendent
• Pro Football Hall of Fame Ribs Burn-Off
  – 1998-2004: Entertainment Committee Technical Liaison for Production and Safety
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My Background

- 2003: Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration, Kent State University
- Louisiana State University at Eunice
  - 2004-2017: Director of Developmental Education (QEP – Pathways to Success and modular mathematics)
  - July 2012-present: Accreditation Liaison
  - July 2013-present: Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- So it is around December 2011 and I am to be the Accreditation Liaison in six months
  - What is an Accreditation Liaison?
  - What is a Track A Institution?
  - What is the difference between Compliance Certification and a Focused Report

Comparisons Pre-Event

Professional Theater
- Contract & rider
  - Technical specifications
  - Catering
- Advance work on road & local crew requirements
- Preparing building
  - Truck & bus parking
  - Show logistics

SACSCOC Site Visit
- Contract is Standards and institutional obligations
  - Meetings
  - Writing responses
- Advanced work
  - Communicating with the on-site committee
  - Shipping documents
  - Travel arrangements
- Preparing campus

Comparisons Show Day

Professional Theater
- Weather and loading In
- Hospitality & convenience
- Runners
- Stress – on call
- Surprises
- Safety and security
- Emergencies
- Performance Quality
- Audience

SACSCOC Site Visit
- Weather
- Hospitality & convenience
- Runners – transportation
- Stress – on call
- Flexibility
- Safety – committee
- Emergencies
- Quality & integrity
- Participants
In other words, before you can do this, you need to put in the work.

Comparisons Post Event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Theater</th>
<th>SACSCOC Site Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weather &amp; loading out</td>
<td>Seeing the committee leave – transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Safety – vans and roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall satisfaction – did people enjoy the show?</td>
<td>Overall satisfaction – any compliance issues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractual follow up and payroll</td>
<td>Six month follow up with committee chair</td>
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Tenth-Year Reaffirmation Process

- SACSCOC.org is your friend
  - Institutional Resources
    - Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation
    - Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation...
  - Committee Resources
  - SACSCOC Vice President
- Annual Meeting and Resource Room
- Visitors with an On-site Committee
Steps in the Reaffirmation Process

- Two Year Process – do not wait for notification!
- Preparation (for Track A Reaffirmation Year 2020):
  - Orientation meeting (January 26, 2018)
  - Advisory visit with SACSCOC VP (optional)
- Off-site Review
  - Institutional Summary Form (ISF) (Due March 1, 2019)
  - Compliance Certification (Due March 1, 2019)
  - Off-site Report Issued (Conducted April 23-26, 2019)
  - Reviewed with SACSCOC VP

Steps in the Reaffirmation Process

- On-site Materials (due to committee six weeks before On-site Visit September 16 – November 15, 2019)
  - Updated ISF
  - Original Compliance Certification Document and Focused Report (if applicable)
  - Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
  - Catalog
  - Written response to Third Party comments (if applicable)
  - Response to requests for information from the chair
- Review SACSCOC Board of Trustees Review (June 8-11, 2020)
  - Response to Committee Report even if there are no recommendations typically due six months after the site visit
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Track A – Typical Schedule for Site Visit  
(schedules often can and do change)
• Monday – might be an all day event
  – Committee arrives and meets for the first time at dinner
  – Visit off-site locations (if applicable)
• Tuesday – 8 am until 10 pm?
  – Morning – committee meets at hotel
  – Travel to institution – welcome and then meetings
  – Visit off-site locations (if applicable)
  – Working lunch – meetings
  – Afternoon – additional meetings
  – Just prior to dinner – committee chair meets with president
  – Dinner
  – Committee will meet and write narratives

Track A – Typical Schedule for Site Visit  
(continued)
• Wednesday focuses on QEP – 8 am until 11 pm (or later)
  – Morning – committee meets at hotel
  – Travel to institution – may conclude meetings related to
    Standards, but there is usually a meeting on the QEP
  – Working lunch with faculty, staff, and students
  – Afternoon – may be additional meetings on QEP
  – Just prior to dinner – committee chair meets with president
  – Dinner
  – Committee meets and complete draft report
• Thursday first thing in morning
  – Meeting announcing results and any findings or
    recommendations
  – Committee usually leaves immediately for airport

LSU Eunice Timeline
• December 2011:  Decided the following:
  – Internal logistics such as timeline, format, and style
  – Used a vendor to organize Standards and attachments (one
    Standard had 400+ links to 200 documents for planning)
  – Reporting method – can use paper or electronic
    – We decided NOT to hire a consultant
• January 31, 2012:  Orientation Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia
• February 2012:  Begin writing (had a schedule)
• March 15, 2013:  Compliance Certification due at SACSCOC
• July 2013:  SACSCOC VP Advisory Visit
• October 4, 2013:  On-site Committee materials sent
• November 19-21, 2013, On-site visit
Approach to Writing Standards

- Integrity
- Convenience for reviewers (attachments should not be sideways...highlight)
- Keep in mind that reviewers know nothing about your institution or state
- Read entire Standard and answer all questions
- Keep in mind that
  - some Standards have a policy and/or template
  - some Standards require an institutional policy
  - Being found noncompliant on a Core Requirement is a problem

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Approach to Writing Standards

- When in doubt...document everything
  - State laws
  - Institutional policies and records
  - Institutional meeting minutes
  - Be careful of scanning documents due to file size
  - Remove sensitive information
- Use on-campus readers (English faculty)
  - Parallel language
  - Style

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Approach to Developing the QEP

- LSUE Website is: http://www.lsue.edu/qep2014/index.php
- Timeline was 18 months – not enough time
- Involved all campus constituencies
- Several years of planning data used
- Written as a research paper
- January 2012: Meetings to brainstorm topics resulting in 43 broad topics – narrowed to 7 common themes
- Summer 2012: Student retention emerged as topic – possible compliance issues with Core Requirement 2.12 and student learning
- Students not being retained were not successful in DE mathematics

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Approach to Developing the QEP

- Fall 2011: Mathematics faculty were working toward “flipping” the DE mathematics classroom (from face-to-face to modular)
- December 2012: Mathematics faculty became aware that DE mathematics might become QEP
- January 2013: Topic decided by QEP Committee
- Spring 2013: Committee wrote document
- Summer 2013: Accreditation Liaison and Leadership Team edited
- September 2013: Committee made final edits
- September – October 2013: Presentations made to various campus constituencies

Hospitality and Travel

- Work with committee chair – how is committee space at hotel and institution to be set up?
- Committee members not permitted to discuss findings
- Accreditation Liaison Travel Agency!
- Information Outline for a Committee Visit (travel form)
  - Emergency contact information
  - Institutional contact numbers
  - Transportation including flight numbers and airport code
  - Room accommodations
  - Dietary Needs including allergies
  - Technology needs

On-Site – Preparing Institution

- Pick and choose students and faculty
- Not a time to air local issues
- Quality Enhancement Plan
- Do not have one person answer all questions
- Runners to take committee members to meetings
- What to expect
- Dress
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On-Site – Transportation & Weather

- Pick up committee members at airport
- Do not leave a committee member stranded
- Safety both for driver and committee members getting in and out of van
- Driver should know area (hotel, airport, institution, restaurants)
- Plan for weather – have umbrellas available
- Help with luggage
- Water in van

On-Site – Meals

- Allergies or special diets
- Alcohol aside, committee members should not pay for own meals
- Working meals at lunch and in evening
- Evening meals should not be too long
- Do not leave committee members stranded
- Do not restrict meals

On-Site – Hotel & Name Tags

- Take care in choice of hotel
- Gifts and preferred snacks
- Welcome from president and local favorite snacks
- Institutional member on call (phone calls may come after 11 pm)
- Wireless
- Team members should not book or pay for own hotel
- Name tags
  - Committee members – place in hotel rooms
  - All institutional personnel who will come into contact with them (including students)
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On-Site – Conference Room

- Committee’s office at hotel and institution
- All committee meetings discussions are confidential
- Institution members should not walk in conference room without permission
- Rooms should be kept locked, but committee members should have access
- Preferred snacks and drinks in conference room
- Office supplies and commercial shredder

Tips for Success

- Do not wait for notification to begin writing
- If you question whether something needs documented – it does and provide more than one example (do not provide blank forms as examples)
- Honesty and integrity
- Provide what the committee asks for
- Prepare for the unexpected
- Do not become defensive
- Are institution and hotel located correctly by mapping Websites?
- Remember – the committee does not know you
- Be flexible – the schedule will change

Thank you for your time
Any Questions?