The Five Core Competencies of Undergraduate Education

CSU Fullerton
October 1, 2015

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Session Roadmap . . .

- What’s the context for the 5 CCs?
- What are the 5 CCs?
  - And why the focus on standards of performance?
- What does WSCUC expect?
  - And how much autonomy do institutions have?
- Resources
HIGHER ED: Is There a Quality Problem???

College Grads Unprepared For Workplace, Study Says
Is There an Accreditation Problem?

Is the focus on ...

- Process?
- Inputs?
- Proxies for learning?
- Accountability?
- Rigorous review?
- Protect institutions?
- Stimulate innovation?

Or on ...

- Results?
- Outcomes?
- Actual learning?
- Improvement?
- Club of peers?
- Protect consumers?
- Stifle innovation?
Preparing Students for 21st Century

NUMEROUS VOICES:

Employers
Higher Ed Media
Popular Books (e.g., Academically Adrift)
Graduate programs
Parents / The Public
Other Resources:

• DQP
• AAC&U VALUE RUBRICS
• AAC&U LEAP
• Etc.

AND OUR OWN REGION!
1. Adding UG 5 Core Competencies
   - Written communication
   - Oral communication
   - Quantitative literacy
   - Information literacy
   - Critical thinking

2. Moving Toward Learning Results
WSCUC’s Path Toward Learning Results

1996: Invitation to Dialogue

2001: Revised Standards
      3-part accreditation review

2008: More emphasis / higher expectations
      for program review, program-level
      assessment

2013: Lightly revised Standards
      Significantly revised institutional review process
A Learning Curve

FROM:
Expecting programs to describe assessment processes

TO:
Asking for the results of these assessments
Another Learning Curve

FROM: WSCUC expecting programs to set standards for student learning

TO: WSCUC asking for evidence that students also achieve those standards
Yet Another Learning Curve

FROM:
Evidence that the institution acts on findings and can show improvement

TO:
Also asking “Is this good enough? How do we know? What means do we use to establish standards of performance or proficiency?”
THE BIG 5!

In no particular order of importance:

Critical Thinking
Information Literacy
Oral Communication
Quantitative Literacy
Written Communication
What’s the 2013 Handbook Say?

2.2 - All degrees—undergraduate and graduate—awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of entry-level requirements and levels of student achievement necessary for graduation that represent more than simply an accumulation of courses or credits.
What’s the 2013 Handbook Say?

• 2.2a – Undergraduate programs ... ensure the development of core competencies including, but not limited to, **written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking**.
What’s the 2013 Handbook Say?

- 2.6 - The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated learning outcomes and established standards of performance.
What’s the 2013 Handbook Say?

- 4.1 - The institution employs a deliberate set of quality-assurance processes ... including periodic program review, assessment of student learning, and other forms of ongoing evaluation. These processes include: collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data; tracking learning results over time; using comparative data from external sources; and improving structures, services, processes, curricula, pedagogy, and learning results.
Handbook – Component 4

- Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation

The institutional review process calls upon institutions to describe how the curriculum addresses each of the five core competencies, explain their learning outcomes in relation to those core competencies, and demonstrate, through evidence of student performance, the extent to which those outcomes are achieved...
Standards Are About Expectations

Not only **WHAT** students should know or be able to do ... 
(outcomes)

**BUT ALSO**

**HOW WELL** they should be able to do it! 
(level of performance / rigor you expect)
Good! Good *Enough?*

- Standards of performance can be a powerful tool.
  - Reflect on what’s important for students
  - Reflect on what’s important for instructors and institutions

- They are a means, not an end.

- They are the logical next step for assessment – and accreditation.

- Used thoughtfully, they can move our institutions and higher education into the 21st century
Institution’s Responsibility:

- Define each competency or outcome
- Establish an institutional standard of performance at or near graduation: “appropriately ambitious”
- Assess, (dis)aggregate findings
- Show extent to which students’ performance meets the institution’s standard of performance
- If improvement is needed, create a plan, with criteria, timeline, metrics, for judging progress
- Report toWSCUC
WSCUC’s Responsibility:

- Provide support, be a partner in the process

- WSCUC will accept . . .
  - Variations within and across institutions
  - Multiple methods and approaches
  - Gradual implementation
  - Innovation, experimentation
WSCUC’s Approach

- Standards of performance are defined by the institution, not WSCUC;
- Assessment methods are chosen by the institution, not WSCUC; and
- Institutions are urged to contextualize results, data/evidence, relative to similar types of institutions and a larger universe.
- Benchmarking is encouraged, but not required.
WSCUC’s Role: Trust and Verify

The WSCUC accreditation process verifies that the institution has:

- set its own standards of performance;
- calibrated its level of performance/proficiency in some way, e.g., internally, against peers, employer expectations;
- generated data/evidence of learning results; and
- developed plans for improvement where needed.
RESOURCES

- 2013 Handbook of Accreditation – on WSCUC’s website
- Core Competency FAQs – on WSCUC’s website
- The Big 5 Retreat
  - November 19-20, 2015 - Pomona
- The WSCUC Academic Resource Conference (ARC)
  - April 6-8, 2016 – Garden Grove

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Success

What people think it looks like

Success

What it really looks like
Thank You!

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