Navigating Through a SACS Accreditation Review

A Model for Crafting a Successful Compliance Certification Report

Questions

What is Accreditation?

Who is SACS?

Answers

Accreditation is a QUALITY AUDIT

WE are SACS

Basic Purposes of Accreditation

- **Improve the quality of education**
  a. Student learning
  b. The student experience
  c. Institutional effectiveness
  d. Effective use of resources

- **Provide accountability**
  a. Students (current and perspective)
  b. Employers
  c. Parents
  d. External funding sources
  e. Board of Trustees
  f. Transfer institutions
  g. Accrediting agencies

*The overall goal of the review is to **ADD VALUE** to the institution*

Student Benefits:
- ➢ *Ease of transfer*
- ➢ *Financial aid*

Quality

GOALS		INPUTS		PROCESSES		OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES
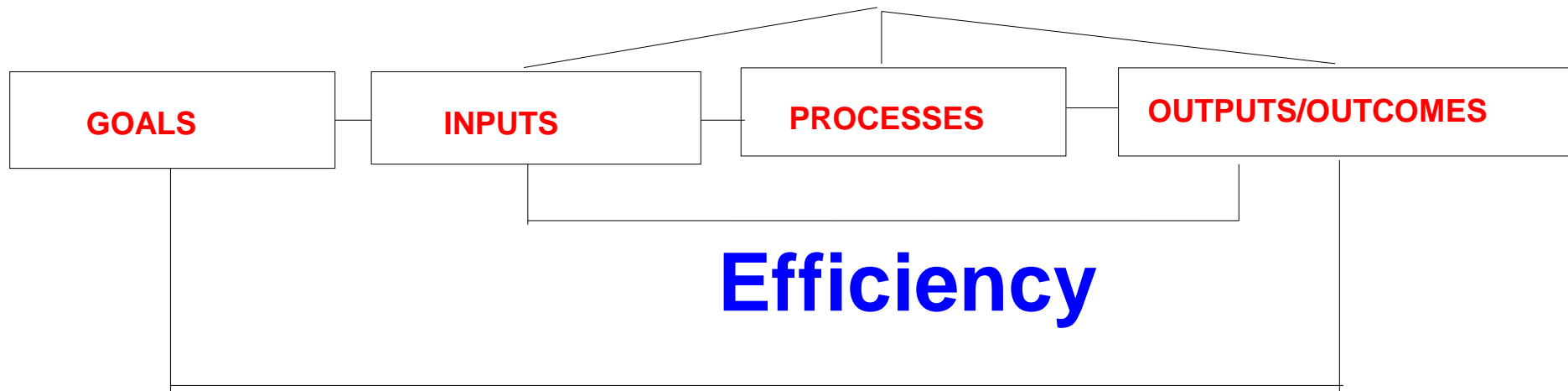
Efficiency

Effectiveness

SACS Accreditation Outline

1. Compliance Certification
   a) Integrity
   b) Core Requirements
   c) Comprehensive Standards
   d) Federal Requirements
2. Quality Enhancement Plan
3. Commission Policies

Compliance Certification

A. Integrity: 1
B. Core Requirements: 12(16)
C. Comprehensive Standards: 14(67)
D. Federal Requirements: 9(11)

➢ *95 Standards*
➢ *92 Standards to respond to in CC*
➢ Evidence (meeting <u>minimum</u> standards)
➢ Signed by President and Accreditation Officer

Compliance Certification

Achieving widespread institutional participation for the compliance review is not a goal.

All Compliance Standards Are Not Created Equally

<u>Core Requirements</u> have a heightened level of importance.

Compliance Certification Tools

✓Master Calendar

✓Responsibility Matrix

✓Communications Plan

✓Support from Leadership

Leadership and Division of Responsibility

- <u>Compliance Certification</u>
  - ➢Small (influential) group
  - ➢Administrative exercise

- <u>QEP</u>
  - ➢Faculty led
  - ➢Representation from all parts of the campus community

The Reaffirmation Process

1. Orientation by SACSCOC
2. Optional Advisory Visit
3. Submission of Compliance Certification
4. Off-Site Peer Review
5. Submission of Focused Report
6. Submission of QEP
7. On-Site Peer Review
8. Submission of Response Report
9. Review by COC

Offsite review is preliminary/advisory.

You get three chances to get it right.

Reaffirmation Timelines by Track

	Track A	Track B
SACS Orientation	January	June
Compliance Certification Due	March	September
Off-Site Peer Review	May	November
QEP Due (and optional focused report)	4-6 weeks prior to on-site visit	4-6 weeks prior to on-site visit
On-Site Review	September-November	January-April
Review by COC	June	December

The "Dirty Dozen"
Standards/Requirements Most Often Cited

1. CS 3.7.1 Faculty Competence
2. CS 3.5.1 College-Level Competencies
3. CS 3.4.1 Academic Program Approval
4. CR 2.11.1 Financial Resources
5. CS 3.3.1 Effectiveness – Expected Outcomes
6. CS 3.2.10 Administrative Staff Evaluations
7. CS 3.4.7 Consortia/Contractual Relationships
8. CR 2.5 Institutional Effectiveness
9. CS 3.7.2 Faculty Evaluations
10. CS 3.11.3 Physical Facilities
11. CS 3.10.1 Financial Stability
12. CS 3.2.13 Foundation Governance

Core Requirement 2.5
Institutional Effectiveness

The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes.

"The goal of institutional effectiveness planning is not to create more work for everyone but to ensure that the work being done is the best it can be."

IE Basics

➢Strategic Plan

➢Annual Goals

➢IE Plan

➢KPIs

➢Tracking Documents

➢Unit Notebooks

➢Program Notebooks

➢Documentation of Use of Results

➢*At least two cycles of evidence*

Planning and Evaluation is required in ALL areas. This is not stated but it is necessary.

Need to provide evidence that you use results to make continuous improvements on every level (institutional, program, course, student).

Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1
Institutional Effectiveness

The institution identifies expected <u>outcomes</u>, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.

The 3.3.1 Series

1. Educational Programs

2. Administrative Support Services

3. Academic and Student Support Services

4. Research

5. Community/Public Service

"Sure, the students like your programs and services, but what evidence do you have that what you are doing is making a difference?"

Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1
College-Level Competencies

The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them.

"Products" of Higher Education
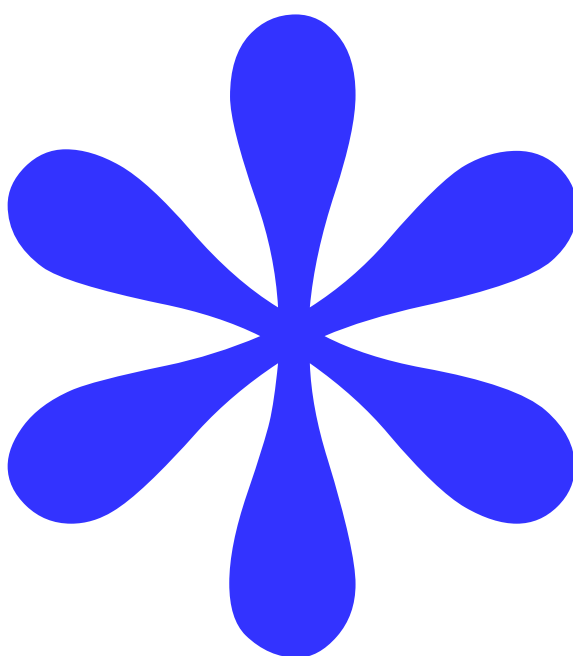
1. **Cognitive Development**

2. **Behavioral Development**

3. **Affective Development**

Student Learning Outcomes defined:

The knowledge, skills and abilities a student has attained at the end (or as a result) of his or her engagement in a particular set of higher education experiences.
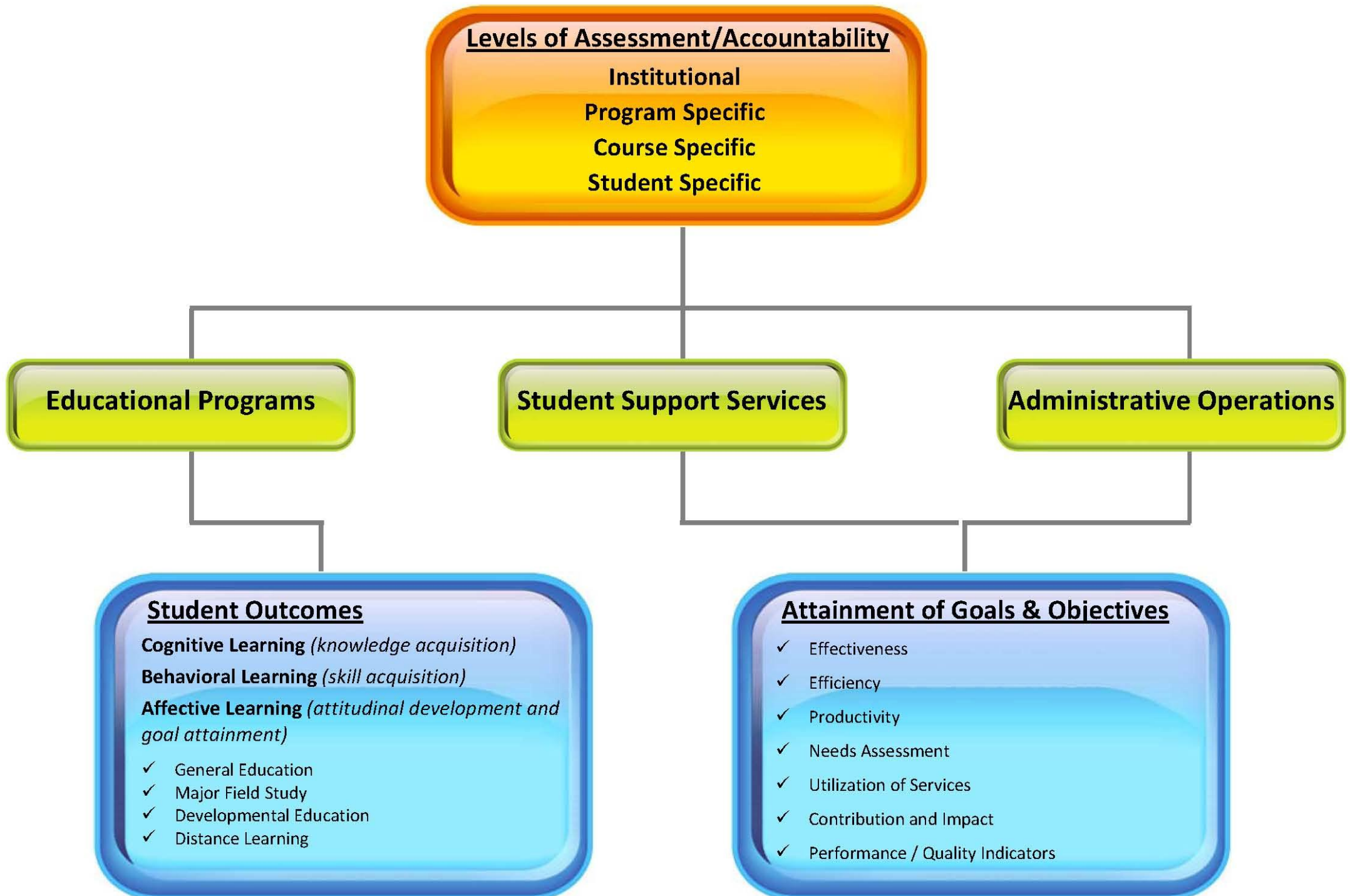
Remember, student achievement *is not the same as* student learning.

On-Site Mandatory Reviews

- ➢ 2.8 Faculty
- ➢ 2.10 Student Support Services
- ➢ 3.2.8 Qualified Admin/Acad Officers
- ➢ 3.3.1 Institutional Effectiveness
- ➢ 3.4.3 Admissions Policies
- ➢ 3.4.11 Academic Program Coordination
- ➢ 3.10.3 Financial Aid Audits
- ➢ 3.11.3 Physical Facilities
- ➢ 3.13.1 Policy Compliance
- ➢ 4.1 Student Achievement
- ➢ 4.2 Program Curriculum
- ➢ 4.3 Publication of Policies
- ➢ 4.4 Program Length
- ➢ 4.5 Student Complaints
- ➢ 4.6 Recruitment Materials
- ➢ 4.7 Title IV Program Responsibilities
- ➢ 4.8 Distance and Correspondence Education
- ➢ 4.9 Definition of Credit Hours

Alamo Colleges Assessment / Accountability Plan

Levels of Assessment/Accountability

Institutional

Program Specific

Course Specific

Student Specific

Educational Programs

Student Support Services

Administrative Operations

Student Outcomes

Cognitive Learning (knowledge acquisition)

Behavioral Learning (skill acquisition)

Affective Learning (attitudinal development and goal attainment)

- ✓ General Education
- ✓ Major Field Study
- ✓ Developmental Education
- ✓ Distance Learning

Attainment of Goals & Objectives

- ✓ Effectiveness
- ✓ Efficiency
- ✓ Productivity
- ✓ Needs Assessment
- ✓ Utilization of Services
- ✓ Contribution and Impact
- ✓ Performance / Quality Indicators

Documentation Rule

If it is not documented then it did not happen.

SACS Major Changes

- College-Level Competencies

- Faculty Credentialing (guidelines)

- IE: Use of Results (closing the loop)

- IE: Student Learning Outcomes

- Policy Compliance

- Distance Education

Other Areas That Require Attention

1. Institutional Mission (CR 2.4, CS 3.1.1)
2. Number of Full-Time Faculty (CR 2.8)
3. Qualified Academic/Administrative Officers (CS 3.2.8)
4. Control of Intercollegiate Athletics (CS 3.2.11)
5. Fund-Raising Activities (CS 3.2.12)
6. Academic Program Coordination (CS 3.4.11)
7. 25% Rule (CS 3.5.2)
8. Representation Status with COC (CS 3.14)
9. Student Complaints (FR 4.5)
10. Recruitment Materials (FR 4.6)

Resources

➢SACS

   ➢Handbooks / Monographs

   ➢Website: www.sacscoc.org

   ➢Liaison

➢CHEA

   ➢Website: www.chea.org

➢Colleagues

Resource Room
On-site and at hotel

- ➢ Compliance certification material and documentation
- ➢ QEP materials
- ➢ Clerical and technical support
- ➢ Computers
- ➢ Internet connectivity
- ➢ Printer
- ➢ Copier and shredder
- ➢ Office supplies
- ➢ Phones (and long distance access codes)
- ➢ Local website
- ➢ Name badges
- ➢ Food and drinks
- ➢ Campus maps
- ➢ On-campus contact information

Reaffirmation Preparedness Tips
The "Top 30"

1. Make effort an institutional priority
2. Start early (catalog and handbook items, credentialing, course and program goals, college rules/policies) and stay on schedule
3. Review material on SACSCOC website
4. Develop a SACS educational campaign for entire college/university community (front & back end)
5. Provide faculty and staff with assistance (assessment)
6. Take a one-college/university perspective (consistency is key)
7. Review and communicate mission statement
8. Prepare for Politics (and resistance)
9. Embrace participation and inclusiveness
10. Develop a responsibility matrix

Reaffirmation Preparedness Tips
The "Top 30"

11. Understand each question / standard
12. Write from the reader's perspective (write to the test)
13. Remember that this is an exercise in technical writing
14. Drown them with data
15. Centralize documentation (resource/war room)
16. Edit final document (make sure report is user friendly)
17. Put your final report in one voice
18. Report should be self-contained
19. Do not make reader "search" for answers (they won't do it)
20. Use no future tense / do not tell SACS what you plan to do (not a confessional)

Reaffirmation Preparedness Tips
The "Top 30"

21. Develop a master calendar and set timelines that are before real deadlines
22. Encourage an electronic mode of delivery
23. Avoid documentation overkill (no data dump)
24. Interpret charts / graphs for readers
25. Have an experienced outsider review your materials
26. Provide orientation to onsite review team (tell them what they will find)
27. Learn from the experiences of others
28. Your colleagues will miss deadlines and annoy you – be relentless
29. Maintain a sense of humor and make it fun
30. ?

Enjoy the conference!