Reaffirming Accreditation:  
THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON’S FIFTH-YEAR INTERIM REPORT

As a member institution of the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the College of Charleston is required to submit a Fifth-Year Interim Report due March 25, 2013, and preparations are underway. The Report will include two primary components: an Impact Report for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and an abbreviated Compliance Certification. The Impact Report will provide evidence of student learning within the First Year Experience, while the Compliance Certification will address the sixteen SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation listed in the table below. In addition, the College may be asked to complete a follow-up report on assessment of general education competencies.

The Fifth-Year Interim Report was developed by SACSCOC to respond to the U.S. Department of Education’s requirements that accrediting bodies continuously monitor institutions to ensure compliance. This is a new report for SACSCOC and is a first for the College to submit. The timeline, process, and preparation/submission updates will be posted to the OIEP website.

### Standards to be reviewed:

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### Spring 2012 Survey Calendar

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This is the first year for the College of Charleston to have an office dedicated to Institutional Effectiveness & Planning, and much of 2011 was spent on systematizing the assessment process. At the present time, we are happy to report, there are 103 Assessment Plans posted to the website. During the spring, we will work with schools and administrative units as they complete their measurements for Assessment Reports that are due in May. The annual Assessment Reports are meant to show how alignment with both the mission and strategic plan occurs intentionally throughout the College. Continuous improvement in student learning, student services, and administrative efficiencies are overarching goals for the entire community, and it is often the measurement of these outcomes that provides evidence for program renewal or expansion. The results for this year’s measurements will be reported on a Microsoft Word template that will be included in the Fifth-Year Interim Report. Over the summer, the OIEP staff plans to convert the reporting process to Compliance Assist, an online system.

Regional accreditation by one of the six US accrediting agencies is, indeed, voluntary, but if a school or college wants to receive Title IV funding from the federal government (think financial aid for students) then regional accreditation is required. The Principles of Accreditation is considered the ultimate source document for SACSCOC and includes all of the standards for compliance. As stated by SACSCOC, this document “provides consistent guidelines for peer review, representing the collective judgment of the membership on standards appropriate for the assurance of quality in higher education.”

The Office for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning is charged with coordinating the documentation for SACSCOC reporting, and Dr. Penny Brunner serves as the SACS Liaison. The duties of the Office are outlined in Core Requirement 2.5 and Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.

CR 2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation process that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. (Institutional Effectiveness)

CS 3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: (Institutional Effectiveness)

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
3.3.1.2 administrative support services
3.3.1.3 educational support services
3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

3.3.2 The institution has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that (1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. (Quality Enhancement Plan)


Assessment & Planning at the College

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Participation Rates in the Assessment Process

- 94% of academic departments/programs have submitted an Assessment Plan. SACS requires assessments for all majors, minors, and certificate programs.
- 92% of the administrative units within Academic Affairs have submitted an Assessment Plan.

Plans for the other administrative areas are being reviewed and should be posted in February/March.
When assigning faculty to teach courses, the College should comply with SACS’ Standard 3.7.1. “…When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. … For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty.” [ii] The newly-revised SACS’ Roster form that accompanies SACS’ submissions asks institutions to include academic degrees, diplomas, certificates and “specific course titles and number of semester hours awarded at the undergraduate or graduate level relevant to the courses assigned”[ii]. “(See guidelines “Faculty Credentials” and “Faculty Roster Instructions.”)

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CS 3.7.1: A STANDARD FOR FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

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FacultY ROSTER: Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, January 2011

CR 2.7.3: ASSESSING GENERAL EDUCATION
THE ETS PROFICIENCY PROFILE

The ETS Proficiency Profile, a standardized test designed to assess students’ competencies in critical thinking, reading, writing, and mathematics, will be administered this spring to aid in assessing general education. Faculty are needed to proctor the exam during 75-minute class periods with the goal of testing 200 freshmen and 200 seniors. Individual test scores for each student and summary reports for cohorts of 50 or larger will be available. The testing period is February 8—February 29. For more information, please contact Karin Roof (roofk@cofc.edu). Our office will coordinate with participating faculty to ensure they have the information and resources they need to proctor the exam in their course.

NOTABLE DATES

ETS Proficiency Profile
February 8—29, 2011

Assessment Reports Due
May 15, 2011

SACS Fifth-Year Interim Report
March 2013

THE WABASH NATIONAL STUDY 2010:
A STUDY OF INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

Fall 2010 marked the College’s entry into the Wabash National Study, a nationwide examination of student learning and the liberal arts. The Center’s work, directed by Charlie Blaich and Kathy Wise, has put it at the forefront of research efforts on student learning outcomes linked to the curriculum of the liberal arts and sciences. Once selected, the study duration is three years in which institutions are to use evidence to identify an area of student learning, and then to create, implement, and assess changes designed to improve those areas.

Our study is focused on integrative learning in writing (wabash.cofc.edu). The goal of participation is to make data-driven changes which enhance student learning. To accomplish this, OIEP coordinated the development of an institutional portfolio which examines incoming student qualities, institutional conditions that support learning, and direct evidence of students’ growth on the proposed outcomes. OIEP extends our thanks to Chris Warnick and Chris Korey for their contributions in coordinating the assessment of student work and to Anthony Bishara, Jennifer Burgess, Amy Mecklenburg-Faenger, Lei Jin, Chris Korey, Lisa Ross, Trish Ward, Chris Warnick, and Jen Wright for serving as readers and scorers of the student work submitted.

The next step of this process is to create an institutional change narrative that will define recommended changes based on the evidence presented in the portfolio. In March, Center of Inquiry Director, Charlie Blaich, and other Teagle Scholars will visit campus to provide guidance in developing our institutional change narrative.
Get to Know the OIEP Website

We consider our website a repository of useful information and resources relating to accreditation, assessment, planning, and reporting. We use our own website continuously and update it frequently. We hope that you will find it as useful as we do! Here is a brief summary of the things you can find there.

Accreditation
- SACS Handbooks and Accreditation Guides
- SACS/QEP documents related to our reaffirmation in 2007, subsequent monitoring, and the upcoming Fifth-Year Report
- SACS Substantive Change Tracking
- Professional Accreditation
- Faculty Credentials Documents

Assessment
- All submitted assessment plans and reports
- The assessment template
- Survey data
- The Deans’ Assessment Committee minutes
- Access to ComplianceAssist! (to be used in the 2012-2013 cycle)

Assessment Resources
- Assessment guide
- Assessment rubric
- Rubrics repository
- Assessment tutorials

Wabash National Study 2010 Information

Planning
- Institutional Planning Cycle
- Access to the College’s Mission, Goals, and Strategic Plan
- State Accountability Reports
- CHE Institutional Effectiveness Reports
- HEOA Links

Policies
- Link to the CofC Policy Page
- Frequently used SACS policies
- Frequently used CHE policies

Voluntary System of Accountability

OIEP staff and newsletter contributors:
Zipora Ancrum
Penny W. Brunner
Ashleigh F. Parr
Karin W. Roof

Student employees and newsletter editors:
Jose Avilés
Lauren Bader
Joe Geglio
Delonta Jones

Institutional Effectiveness & Planning Mission

The mission of the Office for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning is to provide leadership and guidance in support of accreditation, assessment and evidence-based planning at the College of Charleston.

In pursuit of this mission, the assessment team demonstrates knowledge of nationally-recognized practices and standards and serves as institutional consultants in order to:

- Provide effective management and leadership of accreditation-related activities;
- Develop and maintain systematic academic and operational assessment processes in support of College planning and priorities;
- Provide relevant training and feedback in support of practical methods of measurement and evaluation;
- Collaborate with constituents to ensure planning and decision-making activities follow best practices; and
- Build capacity for assessment, planning and continual data-driven improvement.