

4 The Self Evaluation Process

4.1 Purpose of the Self Evaluation Process

4.2 Organization of the Self Evaluation Process/Roles of Campus Groups

It is important for an institution to have a designated committee responsible for the overall planning and supervision of the self evaluation process and the preparation of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report. One possibility is to vest the responsibility for the self evaluation process in an existing college committee that has oversight of the institution's continuous evaluation, student success, planning and/or improvement functions. Another option is to establish a new committee whose membership is drawn from existing committees that have a role in the institution's evaluation, planning and improvement activities. The designated committee should include representatives of faculty and staff with special responsibilities relevant for the topics to be covered in the self evaluation process, such as the chief instructional officer (CIO), Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), institutional effectiveness officer, chief student services officer (CSSO), chief financial officer (CFO), institutional researcher, and technical support staff.

The self evaluation process should be self reflective and consider the institution's strengths, weaknesses, and achievements. Analysis of institutional data against the institutional mission and objectives undertaken by the relevant personnel, and dialog about the results and effects of the analysis is a crucial element in the process to ensure that the self evaluation provides a comprehensive review of the institution. Below is a list of the stakeholders that may be relevant for the institution to involve in the self evaluation process.

- Administrative leadership
- Faculty, including adjunct faculty
- Students, typically student leaders
- Support staff, including researchers and technology staff
- District/system office representatives for colleges in multi-college districts/systems
- Governing boards

As governing boards are ultimately responsible for educational quality and monitoring of institutional performance, including student success, planning, implementation of plans, and participation in accreditation processes, they should be kept current of the progress of the self evaluation process. When the institutional self evaluation has been completed, the Board must read and certify that they have been involved in the process by signing the Certification page of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (see Appendix B).

Role of the Designated Committee

The designated committee is responsible for organizing and coordinating the self evaluation process and for ensuring that appropriate progress is made. In addition, it is an important role of the committee to ensure that evidence is shared within the institution and that relevant internal stakeholders, who have knowledge of data and who can contribute to the analysis of data and evidence, are involved in the process as appropriate.

The institutional intranet or the faculty/staff section on the institution's website can be an effective resource for sharing information relevant for the self evaluation process. One possible approach is to create an electronic repository on the intranet or the website for sharing information, e.g., the timetable for the self evaluation process, minutes from committee meetings, and drafts of the various sections of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report in order for college representatives to post input to the Report. If the institution already has a permanent electronic platform for sharing institutional data, a separate repository for the self evaluation process may not be necessary, or the repository for the self evaluation can provide links to the general information platform so that data is easily accessible for everyone involved in the self evaluation process. If the institution has well organized electronic data and other evidence in place, the presentation of the evidentiary information in electronic format to the evaluation team at the time of submission of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report will be facilitated (see Section 5.2 below).

The institution should give the designated committee sufficient time to assume its responsibilities and provide it with the clerical support needed to complete its work. The Commission encourages the institution to select an editor for the Institutional Self Evaluation Report at the outset so that the editor can participate throughout the process. The editor has multiple roles. The editor must ensure that the Report reads as a coherent text and that it is clear and succinct without excessive repetition and redundancies across the various sections of the report.

A suggested formatting and style sheet is provided in Appendix C. The length of a quality Institutional Self Evaluation Report depends on the size and complexity of the institution. The target length of a good quality report would be approximately 25,000 words (printed on both sides), excluding evidentiary information. (See Section 5.1 below)

Finally, the designated committee is responsible for disseminating the final Institutional Self Evaluation Report to the college community. The evaluation team will expect that trustees, faculty, staff, and administrators are familiar with the content of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report when it meets with them during the evaluation team visit.

In summary, an effective and useful self evaluation process has to balance two needs: 1) to be organized in a manner best fit for the institution's mission and processes, and 2) to address the requirements of the Commission.

Regardless of how an institution chooses to align these needs, there are a number of principles that support a successful self evaluation process. It should:

- address the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (together Commission's Standards), and meet other Commission requirements,
- provide content and evidence for the Institutional Self Evaluation Report,

- include institution-set standards for student achievement and learning outcomes,
- provide and analyze existing evaluation, planning, and improvement data,
- lead to an assessment, based on analysis of data, of the quality of the institution's programs and services and its institutional effectiveness as well as the formulation of plans and actions for improvement, and
- involve the institutional stakeholders who have a role in improving institutional quality.

Excerpted from the *Manual for Institutional Self Evaluation* (Oct 2015)