Regional Accreditation of Higher Education

Accreditor Perspectives on the New Designs for Assuring Quality in Higher Education
Types of Accreditation

- PROFESSIONAL
- SPECIALIZED
- NATIONAL
- REGIONAL (or Institutional)

- HLC (North Central)
- NEASC (New England)
- MSA (Middle States)
- SACS (Southern)
- WASC (ACSCU, AACJC-W)
- NWCCU (Northwest)

3500 Regionally Accredited Institutions

Coordinating Groups
Institutional Accreditors

NWCCU

SACS

WASC

HLC
-North Central-

MSA

NEASC

SACS
Central Premises

- Mission and membership based
- Dual goals: quality assurance & quality improvement
- Voluntary (provided through private, 3rd-party agencies) and non-governmental
Central Premises

- Self-regulation, member-defined standards
- Robust practice of institutional self-evaluation and peer review
- Responsive and responsible to diversity of institutions, of missions, of students
What is Quality?

Focus on Quality

excellence in leadership!
excellence in innovation!
excellence in management!

excellence in excellence!!
Who Gets to Define It?
Has the entire backdrop changed?
Has the entire backdrop changed?
National Goals
Global Context
Emerging Accountability Systems...

- Student Success
- Student Engagement
- Student Performance (learning)
**NEW Questions**

- Are you doing as well for your students as the place down the road?

- What and how well are your students learning in comparison to peer institutions?

- In what ways do you inform the public about what students learn and how well?
Pressing Questions

- What does a degree testify to?
- How do we know when good enough is good enough?
- Who sets the standards? The process? The measures? Who defines quality?
- Is it the appropriate learning? Appropriate for what? For whom?
Quality (assessment, accreditation),
Productivity (accountability, completion),
Transparency (openness, information)

...a matter of improving?
...a matter of proving?
...a matter of disclosing?
What will, can, must we say about learning to the public?
Impact on Accreditors

- Deal with strategic issues and bureaucratic details
- Shift from vouching for institution to verifying specifics more distant from academic core
- Expectation for consumer protection and watchdog capacity