DESIGNING THE SELF STUDY
Research Questions and Working Groups

Dra. Mérida Mercado
January 18, 2011
Self-Study Design

A design for self-study is a blueprint for the self-study process and for the final self-study report. It guides the steering committee and working groups in their discussion, research, and writing, and the self-study report builds on the original design document. In some cases, actual parts of the design document, such as the institutional overview and the statement of objectives, can be modified for use in the introductory chapter of the self-study.
SELF-STUDY DESIGN - ELEMENTS

- Nature and Scope of the Self-Study
  - The nature and scope of an institution’s self-study will vary with each institution’s needs and special circumstances. Therefore this section of the design document should identify the model that the institution has chosen and demonstrate that its approach to self-study will be useful, attuned to current and future institutional needs and priorities, and focused on the teaching and learning process.
SELF-STUDY DESIGN - ELEMENTS

Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

- The goals for the self-study process are what the institution intends to achieve by an in-depth analysis of itself. A concise statement of the major outcomes expected from the self-study will help to remind the institution’s community that the purposes of self-assessment and peer review include deepening institutional self-understanding and advancing institutional self-improvement.
SELF-STUDY DESIGN - ELEMENTS

Charges to the Working Groups and Guidelines for Their Reports

- define their tasks
- guidance for their research and reporting.
  - standard(s) or topic(s) the working to address
  - specific activities and products expected
    - Prepare research questions
    - gathering and analyzing evidence
    - Producing outlines, preliminary drafts, and final drafts of reports.
Using existing documents.

- Description in the self-study report should be kept to a minimum, and existing documents should be cited as evidence whenever possible. As they identify the key requirements of a standard and relate them to institutional situations, self-study groups should determine to what extent the institution’s possession of the traits, resources, processes, or abilities identified in the key requirement of the standard is demonstrated in existing documents or other evidence already at hand.
Effective self-study questions elicit analytical responses and suggestions for improvement.

- A certain amount of description is necessary to demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards.
- Existing documents (with brief explanations) should be cited within the report as evidence.
  - Very few research questions should ask for purely descriptive responses.
  - Those that do should be balanced by questions that require evaluation and judgment.
Self-study design: Research Questions

- **Ask**
  - Questions that stimulate thinking about important topics
  - Questions that allow the self-study to address the standards through the lens of specific institutional traits, developments, or issues
  - Questions that require evaluation and judgment
  - Questions that are worth the effort it will take to answer them
  - Questions that connect standards and different dimensions of the institution

- **Avoid**
  - Questions with obvious answers
  - Questions with yes/no answers
  - Unanswerable questions
  - Questions that directly mirror the Fundamental Elements of a standard.
SELF-STUDY DESIGN: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

EXAMPLES BY MS-CHE

- How effective is the institution’s admissions policy in producing the students we want?
- Are the goals of the admissions process for the institution sufficiently clear, realistic, and consistent with the institution’s mission?
- Are retention goals consistent with long-term strategic and financial planning?
- What do demographic trends suggest will be the future of the institution’s student base, how is the institution positioning itself to handle any anticipated demographic changes, and what else should it consider doing?
SELF-STUDY DESIGN: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

EXAMPLE BY GROUP AT SELF-STUDY INSTITUTE

- How effectively are assessment results integrated into planning and resource allocation to improve programs, services and processes in order to accomplish institutional mission and goals as well as institutional renewal?

This question addresses multiple issues that can be integrated into subset of questions.
Questions and discussions.
SELF-STUDY- IAUPR, ARECIBO

- Comprehensive model
- Standards grouped
  - By workgroups
  - By chapters of the Self Study Report
- Groups respond to standards and campus organization
  - Allows for discussion of topics where evidence is produced by processes within functional interacting units
    - Ex. Academics is based on the coordination of educational offerings (programs and learning resources), general education and faculty
Inventory of existing documents.

Documents will be classified according to their relevance to the workgroup

- Documents will be classified by
- Documents will be available in SharePoint
  - System of privileges for access to documents
    - General publications
    - By workgroup
ACTIVIDAD PARA HOY

- Reunión de los grupos de trabajo para:
  - Discutir los temas o “issues” identificados mediante el cuestionario o en discusiones subsiguientes
  - Recomendar lo que se debe integrar al próximo cuestionario que se administrará a la facultad y al personal administrativo
  - Diseñar preguntas de investigación que pueden ser asignadas a subgrupos
    - Identificar documentos necesarios para el grupo de trabajo
LOCALIZACIÓN DE LOS GRUPOS

- Sala A, CAI – Académico ,
- Sala B, CAI – Assessment,
- Salón B 10, Misión, Metas e Integridad,
- Salón B 11, Planificación
- Salón B 12, Gobierno y Administración
- Salón B 13, Estudiantes y Servicios
- Salón B 14, Actividades Relacionadas