New Jersey Assessment Consortium: A Means for Addressing a Changing Accreditation Environment

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Session Learning Outcomes

As a result of this session, participants will:

- See the benefits of creating & belonging to a consortium.
- Take away specific strategies to create a successful one.
- Learn how a consortium can help you deal with MSCHE issues, concerns, & adjust to changing accreditation requirements.
- Recognize that accreditation matters transcend the size & nature of an institution.
Why we thought consortium was a good idea:

- Overcome isolation when working on LOA
- Facilitate sharing of effective strategies
- Assist with solving common problems
- Learn from each other.
ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Who, what, when, where?
Who are members?

- Assessment personnel: institutional researchers, faculty, & information technology reps
- Broad section
- Diversity of jobs
Current Membership Includes:

- 4 community colleges
- 5 state universities
- 1 Research university
- 11 Private/Independent universities/colleges

*Cross-section of N.J. higher ed. institutions*
What have we done so far?

- Meetings – 3 times a year; agenda set by members
- Workshops – provided to address current & changing MSCHE assessment matters
- Out reach to other NJ higher ed institutions.
- Survey – used for gaining info on members’ interests, views & concerns
BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Several expectations are realized
Key Benefit—Timely, Relevant Topics

- Data management systems
- Assessing general education
- Strategies for getting faculty buy-in regarding assessment
- Use of standardized assessment tools – CLA, Value Rubrics, etc.
- Program-level assessments
Specialized workshops

- Using Assessment to Understand Learners and Increase a Sense of Urgency for Needed Change.
- Validity and Reliability of Assessment Measures over Time.
- Report on Carnegie Grant on Assessing General Education
Key Benefits—Middle States

- Reporting out from schools who have:
  - Been through recent self-studies
  - Been on warning
  - Recently submitted PRR’s
Key Benefits – Middle States, cont.

- Reporting out on MSCHE conference highlights
- New Middle States expectations:
  - Validity and reliability
  - Supporting documents for self-study
  - Inclusion of non-academic areas in assessments
Survey of NJAC Members
September 2012

1. Have you attended any meetings of the New Jersey Assessment Consortium?
   - No ☐  Yes ☐

2. If so, approximately how many?
   - A. none, as yet
   - B. one
   - C. two
   - D. three
   - E. four
   - F. more than four
3. Has your participation in the NJAC helped you with assessment at your institution?
   No ☐   Yes ☐

4. If so, please share how and include specific examples if possible.

5. What kinds of topics or issues relevant to assessment would you like to have addressed at future meetings?
Survey Data Revealed:

1. Have you attended any meetings of the NJAC?
   - No 1
   - Yes 13

2. If so, approximately how many?
   - none, as yet 0
   - one 2
   - two 2
   - three 2
   - four 4
   - more than four 4

3. Has your participation in the NJAC helped you with assessment at your institution?
   - No 3
   - Yes 11
4. If so, please share how and include specific examples if possible.

  collegiality  resources  share information
  5            4            10

5. What kinds of topics or issues relevant to assessment would you like to have addressed at future meetings?

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Next Steps for NJAC

- Mentoring member institutions through the various stages of the process for reaffirming accreditation
  - Self-study strategies
  - Visiting Team successes and pitfalls
  - Interpreting and responding to the various levels of MSCHE actions
  - Key processes for supporting institutional goals through assessing student learning and institutional effectiveness
Exploring Advocacy

- Advocating to MSCHE as a group when appropriate
- Gaining insight into Middle States evaluators’ perspectives.
- Discussion of current MSCHE policies
Thinking of starting an Assessment Consortium?

- Technology is an important tool
- Directory with e-mail addresses.
- Postings regarding conferences, articles, etc.
- Blog set up for member discussions.
- Minutes uploaded for reference.
What worked for us

• Informal approach
• Welcoming atmosphere—we are here to support each other
• Members set the agenda and volunteer to present on topics
• Meeting sites rotate—members volunteer their campuses
• Food is essential
WRAP UP
Discussion and Q & A
We are happy to take your questions
For more information:

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