Perspectives on Accreditation: How Accreditation Issues Impact Higher Education Planners

Valarie Avalone, Director of Planning
Monroe Community College
About MCC

- Comprehensive community college founded in 1961 in Rochester, NY;
- Four campus locations
- Serves over 38,000 credit/noncredit students in 90+ degree and certificate programs;
- 70% of students enrolled in transfer programs.
- Budget: $123,780,000
About Me

Director of Planning

- ALO – Co-chaired 2005-2006 Self Study and 2011 PRR
Learning Outcomes

• To develop a greater understanding of strategies, skills, and tools needed by planners to position community colleges to successfully accomplish accreditation and planning endeavors

• To understand what integrated planning is and why it is important
Learning Outcomes (cont.)

• To implement an institutional effectiveness model which incorporates an integrated and college-wide resource allocation process

• To review challenges to, and traits of, successful integrated planning and institutional effectiveness
Current Environment

• Need to be more cost effective
• Increase learner success
• Need to illustrate transparency
• Prove accountability
Sorting it All Out

How do we know what expectations and/or requirements are current?

Where should we be putting our efforts?
Approaches and skills needed to position community colleges for the future

“It is not the strongest that survive. Nor the most intelligent…it is the one that is the most adaptable to change.”

Charles Darwin
Skill Sets Needed by Planners

- Analytical
- Big picture people
- Visionary
- Futurist
- Optimist

- Facilitator/Mediator
- People skills
- Problemsolvers
- Creative
- Envision alternatives

http://www.planetizen.com/node/34807
Structured Planning Activities

- Process
  - Transparency
- Timeline
  - Opportunities for Input & Feedback
  - Links between Planning & Budget
  - Benchmarks & Performance Indicators
- Team
  - Utilization of Results
  - Communication
Integrated Planning

...is the process whereby all planning and budget activities, throughout every level of the organization, are effectively linked and coordinated, and are driven by the institution’s vision, mission, and academic priorities.

Dawson, Quinney, Stack
To what degree do you believe that *integrated* planning occurs as part of your institution’s decision making process?
Challenges to Realizing Integrated Planning

- Often planning functions are isolated -- not cross functional
- No one person to tie it all together
- Needs to be viewed more as a profession
- Lack of associated degree/credentials
- Lack of connection to executive level
Challenges (cont.)

• Question of value – will it make a difference?
• Not realized/viewed as necessary
• There is a lack of resources required to support it
• Requires a culture shift and change
Successful Integrated Planning

• Requires planning to plan
• Planning should be strategic, aligned, and institution wide
• It takes into consideration campus culture
• The process needs to be open and transparent
• Planning and resources must be linked
• Success should be measured and shared
Institutional Effectiveness

Measuring institutional effectiveness, both qualitatively and quantitatively, supports the complementary functions of institutional improvement and accountability to the stakeholders the College serves.
Links Between Planning & Budgeting

Formalize and document the link between planning and assessment processes and the budgeting/resource allocation process

– Examples
  • Facilities Master Plan
  • Enrollment Plan
  • Technology Plan
Establish an institutionalized, standard process for the assessment of professional/administrative units with the anticipated outcome of demonstrating institutional effectiveness.
Documenting Activities

- Documentation should be created to verify the progress and assessment of activities – “closing the loop”
- Assessment results should be utilized to effect improvement
Lessons Learned

• Commitment/Empowerment
• Risk Taking
• Integration
• Monitor Outcomes
• Flexibility
• Communicate Results
• Reward & Celebrate
Questions, Comments, Reactions