

Exploring the Benefits of Self-Evaluation

QQI Enhancement Conference

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Barbara Brittingham

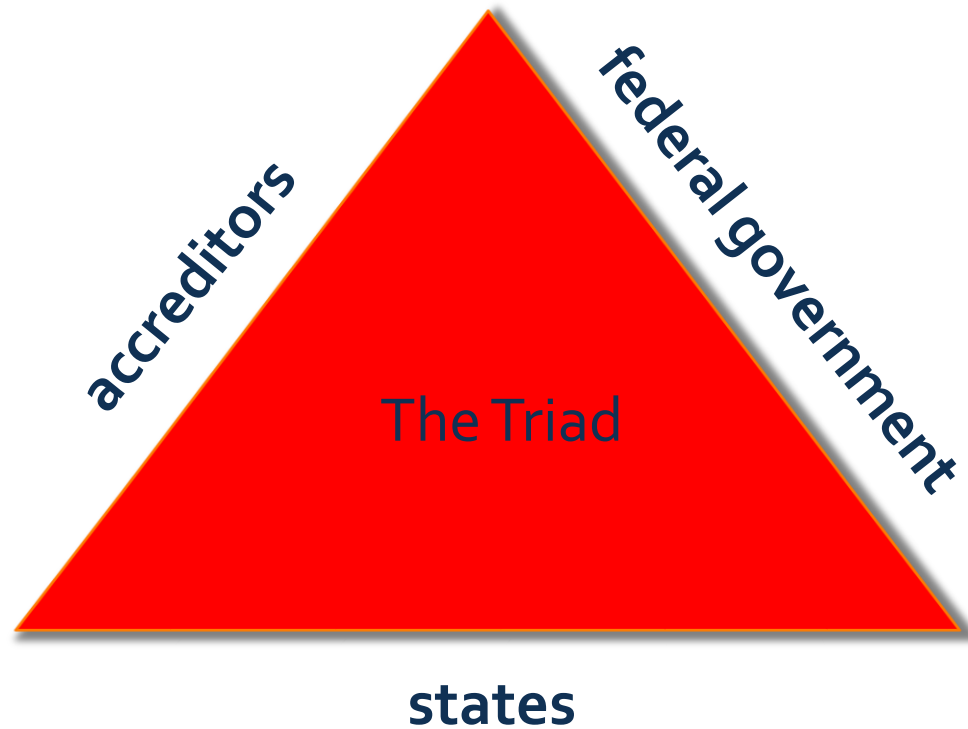
CIHE of NEASC

bbrittingham@neasc.org

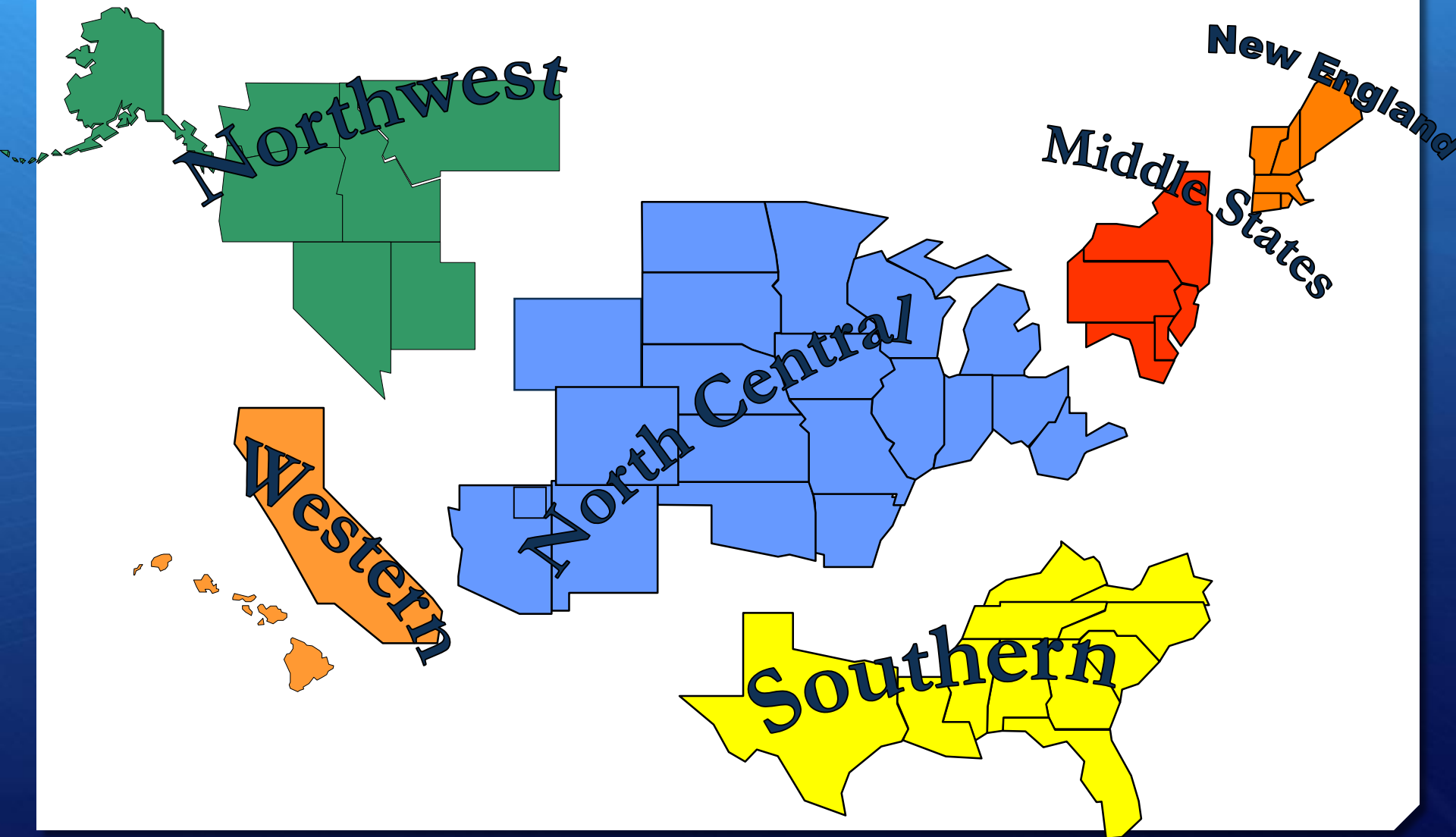
Overview

- Parachute in to U.S. accreditation
- Some institutional examples
- Two types of quality assurance
- Overview of how accreditation works
- A focus on student learning
- What institutions do and have learned
- Time for questions and comments

Quality Assurance in the United States



The Regions of Regional Accreditation



Accredited institutions, by type, with number of students, by type (CHEA, 2011)

	Public	Non-Profit	For-Profit	Total	Students (ooo)
Regional	1561	1383	106	3050	20,547
National Faith-related		468	2	470	150
National Career-related	276	221	3801	4298	4,526
Total Institutions	1837	2072	3909	7818	
Total Students					24,941

Approximately 75% of US students attend public institutions.

Plus Programmatic Accreditation*

- 64 Recognized accreditors
- 22,000 programs (and some free-standing institutions)
- Over 3.4 million students

*Also called 'professional' or 'specialized' accreditation

Two minute history of American accreditation

1. 1885: New England Association of Schools and Colleges
2. Periodic review
3. Standards
4. Self-study and visit. . . . and decision
5. Peer review
6. Self regulation
7. Link to federal government
8. Expectations rising

Characteristics of American Accreditation

- Private, nongovernmental organizations
- Self-regulatory system: membership organizations
- Voluntary
- Benefits
 - Federal financial aid
 - Tuition reimbursement
 - College guides
 - Research funding
 - Public confidence
- De-centralized system
- Evolved, not designed
- Volunteer, peer evaluators
- Funded by dues and fees
- Relies on candor and integrity

Two Types of Quality Assurance

A proof exercise

- Regulatory
- Quantitative: 8,000 books
- Bright lines
- Checking and verifying

A thinking exercise

- Collegial
- Qualitative (and quantitative)
- Nuanced, mission-sensitive
- Probing and analyzing

Many systems are a blend

What's important in a thinking exercise?

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Creativity and rigor in the use of evidence} \\ + \\ \text{Candor in the identification of weaknesses} \\ + \\ \text{Focus on improvement} \\ = \\ \text{Capacity and commitment of the institution} \\ + \\ \text{Confidence in the system} \end{array}$$

Accreditation is a balance of:

Assuring
Quality



Fostering
improvement

Variety in Institutional Mission

A Sample of *Public*, Independent, and For-Profit Institutions

Harvard University

College of the Atlantic

Hartford Seminary

Bay State College

Wellesley College

Boston Architectural College

U.S. Naval War College

Maine Maritime Academy

Johnson & Wales University

Goodwin College

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

Berklee College of Music

University of New Hampshire

Community College of Vermont

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Bates College

Hult International Business School

Rhode Island College

American University in Bulgaria

Conway School of Landscape Design

New England College of Business and Finance

Vermont College of Fine Arts

Basics of the Accreditation Process in the US

- Standards: Set by the membership
- Self-study
- Visit by team of peers
- Decision by Commission (Peers and public members, all elected by the members)

Cycle and monitoring

Nine Standards for Accreditation

Mission and Purposes

Students

Planning and Evaluation

Teaching, Learning, and
Scholarship

Organization and
Governance

Institutional Resources

The Academic Program

Educational Effectiveness

Integrity, Transparency,
and Public Disclosure

Input, Process, Outcome

Input

Process

Outcome

Are there
enough
books in the
library?

Are students using
the books?

Are students
gaining skills of
information
literacy?

.....

Are the faculty
well qualified?

Is there good
instructional
practice?

Are students
achieving the
learning outcomes
of the program and
institution?

Is the
curriculum
appropriate?

Do students get
practice and
feedback?

.....

Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by ensuring satisfactory levels of student achievement on mission-appropriate student outcomes. Based on verifiable information, the institution understands what its students have gained as a result of their education and has useful information about the success of its recent graduates. This information is used for planning and improvement, resource allocation, and to inform the public. Student achievement is at a level appropriate for the degree awarded.

Some methods used in self-study

- Steering Committee + Standards committees
- Town hall meetings
- Office hours
- Use of existing data
- Use of existing committees
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Alignment with strategic planning

Some Goals of Self-Study

- Groundwork for strategic plan
- Implementation check of strategic plan
- Increased use of data
- Diversity to inclusion
- Benchmark with other institutions
- Bring together plans and evaluations
- Finer grain on retention and graduation
- Campus involvement in shared mission

4 Elements of Educational Effectiveness

1. Retention and Graduation Rates
2. Quantitative Measures of Student Success
3. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
4. Program Review

Institutional Goals and Measures

- Progression to the higher degree
- Employment in the state
- Civic engagement
- Retention and graduation rates
- Student and alumni satisfaction

Supports for Assessment

1. Advisory Councils
2. Surveys of: employers, students, graduates
3. Internship supervisors' feedback
4. Specialized accreditation and licensure tests
5. Internal tracking studies
6. Peer partners

Lessons Learned re: Assessment

1. Don't over-complicate it.
2. Use measures you can trust.
3. Take time to think through the findings.
4. If something doesn't work, try something else.
5. If you keep getting the same results, use the measure less frequently.
6. Trends are important.

Some Questions

Where is assessment working well?

What can we learn from our successes?

How well are we supporting assessment through priorities, statements, money, time, and use of results?

What is most important to do next?

How can we celebrate successes?

Keys to a Successful Self Study

- Mission
- Evidence
- Candor
- Make it useful

Benefits of Self Study

- Self-knowledge: “I thought I knew this place.”
- Improvement.
- Demonstration of capacity of the institution to look after itself.

***Time for your
comments and
questions.***