

WASC Core Values, Timelines and Ways to Participate

Overview and Core Values

The Handbook of Accreditation revision provides an opportunity for assessing where we are, what has worked and not worked in our current model, and where we need to go next. It typically involves reviewing all of the Standards, Policies and elements in the Visit Process that are parts of our *Handbook of Accreditation*. Since the adoption of the 2001 *Handbook*, enormous progress has been made in meeting the objectives of the Commission by nearly all institutions in working through our three stage model, and building an infrastructure for learning outcomes assessment and program review. Feedback from the External Review of WASC and from the 2010 ARC reflects a clear desire for improving the WASC process by reducing the time, cost and workload occasioned by the multi-stage process, while continuing the emphasis on educational effectiveness and student success. At the same time, in the past few years, serious challenges have arisen to the effectiveness of accreditation in addressing low graduation rates, evidence of ineffective learning of graduates, and questionable practices by for-profit institutions.

The Commission has determined that both sets of issues will need to be addressed in developing the next generation of the WASC process. In doing so, the Commission has adopted a core set of values to support the redesign of the accrediting process. The values have been affirmed by the Steering Committee:

- WASC should place achievement of appropriate levels of student learning and student success at the center of the accrediting process
- The WASC process needs to authentically and visibly respond to external concerns regarding institutional accountability
- The WASC process needs to respond to institutional concerns about the cost, workload, time and value added of the process
- The WASC process needs to be adaptable to different institutional types and institutions at different stages of development and maturity
- The WASC process needs to be open to new approaches and innovation of institutional structure and delivery methods, and WASC itself needs to find ways to maintain its own ability to experiment and pilot new approaches
- The WASC process needs to build on the progress institutions have made under the 2001 *Handbook* and on existing evidence wherever possible

[See the Commission Values Statement at www.wascsenior.org/handbook]

Structure and Timeline

Chaired by Anna DiStefano, the revision process is overseen by a Steering Committee of 16 members from throughout the region. Over 80 institutional representatives have been involved in working through the key issues the Commission has identified [see the Summary of Commission Goals] in five Task Force meetings, and they have each affirmed the specific steps

outlined by the Commission. In addition, a number of meetings have been held in Hawaii and California to discuss these Commission initiatives – including with presidents, ALOs and provosts of Hawaii institutions, the Executive Committee of the AICCU, the Executive Committee of the CSU Faculty Senate, the Executive Committee of the UC Academic Council, President Yudof and Provost Pitts of the UC, and provosts of southern California faith-based institutions.

Based on the work of the Task Forces and the consultations conducted, the Commission is ready to move forward to design processes to implement its key goals. We need your best ideas in designing a process that is consistent with the core values stated above.

There are many ways to contribute your ideas:

At the ARC

ALO meeting CAO Forum
CEO Forum Conversation with the President
Learning Commons Lounge

Afterwards

Visit and add your comments to www.wascsenior.org/handbook.

Discuss your ideas with members of the Steering Committee.

Respond to periodic reports circulated by the WASC Office and Steering Committee.

Participate in Webinars that will be organized over the coming months.

Join the learning communities organized around the key Task Force areas.