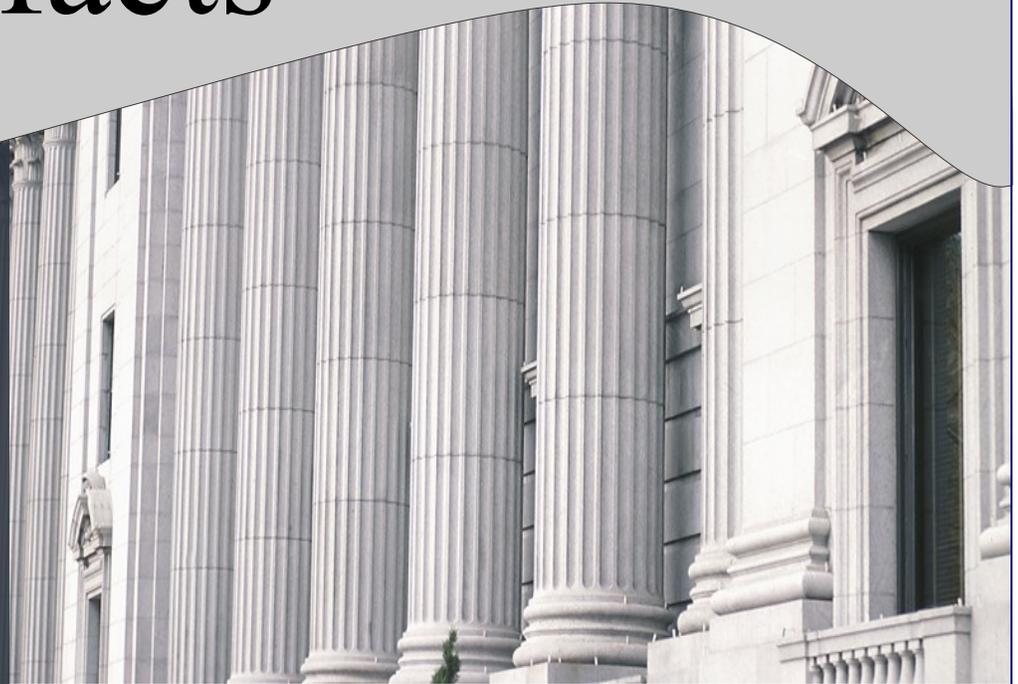


SACS facts



In this issue

COUNT DOWN

DID YOU KNOW?

ASSESSMENT

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

By the numbers **P.2**

What happens at an on-site visit
and who is on the team? **P.2**

SACSCOC visit dates **P.2**

College mission statement **P.2**

What is embedded assessment
and why use it? **P.3**

CCSSE **P.3**

Critical thinking definition **P.4**

Key components of the five-year
plan **P.4**

It's not too soon to start
identifying critical thinking
strategies! **P.4**

Newsletter Editors
Karen Pain
Helen Shub

Issue 5 ~ April 2011

COUNTDOWN:

We now await feedback regarding our submitted Compliance Certificate... The report was submitted March 1st and will be reviewed by an off-site evaluation team in April and May. Submitting the Compliance Certificate to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the first formal step in the process of applying for reaffirmation. Additional requirements include submitting a Focused Report (our response to peer evaluation of the Compliance Report), submission of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), and the on-site visit.

4 months to submit the Focused Report

4 months to submit the QEP document

6 months until the on-site visit



SACSCOC - Did you know?



SACS by the numbers

It's nothing new. SACSCOC was established in 1895, granting accreditation to six universities in four states. This regional accrediting agency is one of six in the United States.

We're in good company. There are 804 higher education institutions in 11 states and other international locations that are accredited by SACSCOC. Currently, institutions must meet 76 separate requirements for reaffirmation. These include Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, Federal Requirements, and the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP is actually reviewed apart from other requirements and standards, and has a separate set of criteria.

SACSCOC site visit is October 11-13, 2011

Information about the visit will be readily available this fall! But please begin to look ahead now. Plan to...

- Be on campus during the visit.
- Know the mission of the College.
- Know that QEP stands for Quality Enhancement Plan.
- Know that **our** QEP will improve student learning by focusing on critical thinking both in the classroom and on campus.

What happens at an on-site visit and who is on the team?

A group of SACSCOC evaluators will comprise the visiting team this fall. It might be helpful to know that these evaluators are our peers. They are administrators and faculty from institutions outside of Florida but within the SACSCOC region. They are from institutions that have to meet the same requirements for reaffirmation.

When they arrive, a few things will happen. They will first meet as a group to discuss our Compliance Report that was submitted in March and evaluated by a different group of peers. They will also review the Focused Report (our response to the Compliance Report evaluation). Then they will tour our campuses and meet with administrators to discuss details of our programs. Finally, they will interview faculty, staff, and students about our QEP.

More to come about this in the fall!

Mission of the College

Palm Beach State College, founded in 1933 as Florida's first public community college, is a diverse, comprehensive institution dedicated to serving the educational needs of Palm Beach County. Integrally linked to the community through strong partnerships, the College provides associate and baccalaureate degrees, professional certificates, workforce development and lifelong learning.

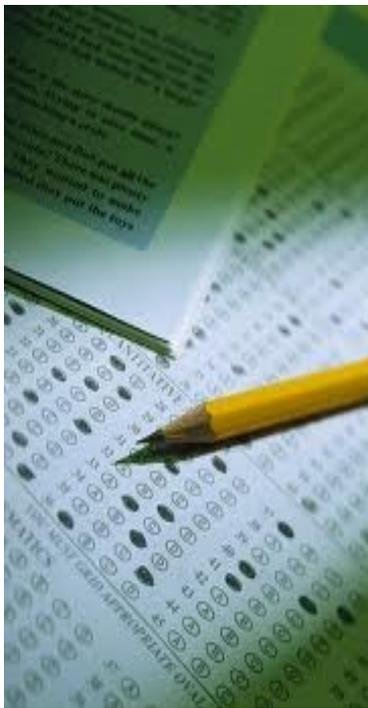
Palm Beach State College's mission is to create and sustain a dynamic teaching and learning environment that provides a high-quality, accessible, affordable education, preparing students to contribute and compete ethically and successfully in a diverse global community.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ACCREDITATION AND THE REAFFIRMATION PROCESS, PLEASE VISIT: <http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/sacs.xml>

Assessment

What is embedded assessment and why use it?

Simply put, it's a process to assess institutional outcomes that includes using the regular work that students produce in their classes. This could be a final exam, a chapter quiz, a lab project, a research paper, an oral presentation, or anything that the professor would regularly use to evaluate the students in the class. One of the big advantages of this type of assessment is that students are unaware that their efforts are being utilized for College-wide assessment. The work they produce is more indicative of their normal work rather than something produced just for institutional assessment purposes and their motivation to perform is high because the assessment is part of their normal coursework and grade.



Sneak peek!

This semester, an embedded assessment pilot is being conducted in Professor Tcherina Duncombe's Concepts of Biology class. Dean Diane Bifano presented a short seminar on presentation skills to assist students in their preparation of an oral presentation. The students' performance on this presentation will be graded by Professor Duncombe using a rubric to measure several fundamental oral presentation skills. Both Professor Duncombe and Dean Bifano have already declared this pilot a success because of what they have learned about each other's discipline by working together. Professor Duncombe stated that as a result of the pilot, she now has a better idea of what to look for as she grades her students' oral presentations. During Summer A, in addition to Dean Bifano's presentation on oral communication skills, Professor Duncombe's students will also hear a presentation on research skills from librarian Connie Tuisku. Stay tuned for more exciting news on our pilots!

CCSSE

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is an assessment tool that provides information on student engagement, something that research tells us is a key indicator of learning. The survey consists of items that assess institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and student retention. This semester, CCSSE was administered in 95 classes. Once the College receives the results from CCSSE, the Institutional Research and Effectiveness Office sifts through the data in order to present the results in a meaningful way to the College community. You can expect to start hearing about the results beginning sometime next fall.

MORE ABOUT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT, PLEASE VISIT:
<http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/LearningOutcomes.xml>

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

QEP DEFINITION OF CRITICAL THINKING: *using the skills needed to explore, evaluate, express, and engage in purposeful reasoning in order to reach sound conclusions, decisions, positions, and/or solutions. (definition reached by College-wide consensus, September, 2010)*



It's not too soon to start identifying critical thinking strategies!

True, we do not begin to implement the QEP until spring 2012. However, one of the QEP actions will include developing critical thinking resource centers, both online and on campus. And one of the goals of the resource center initiative is to create an inventory of strategies for teaching and assessing critical thinking.

Key components of the five-year plan

The document is still being finalized, but there are two primary goals and some main actions that we know will be included. One goal will be directly related to student learning. The other will focus on professional development opportunities. The key components of the plan will include the following:

- Curriculum development
- Awareness campaign
- Student workshops
- Peer mentoring
- College-wide events / activities
- Impact projects for service-learning opportunities and community innovation
- Faculty leadership
- Faculty and staff workshops
- Resource centers
- Collaboration groups
- Conference participation

We will find external sources, but we also want to showcase successful strategies that are already in use by our own full-time and part-time faculty and instructors!

Selection will begin this fall, so don't be shy! If you have a strategy for teaching or assessing critical thinking, please consider "writing it up" and sending it now to Karen Pain (paink@palmbeachstate.edu).



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE QEP, PLEASE VISIT OR CALL:
<http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/QEP.xml> ~ 561-868-3325