Using the Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool to Support Accreditation Needs

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ACHIEVING THE DREAM
OBJECTIVES FOR TODAY

• To understand how the seven capacity areas can be applied to the accreditation process.
• To understand how this broad-based qualitative data can support decision-making.
• To learn how to document the assessment process to provide evidence for accreditation.
• To apply actual results to regional accrediting agency standards.
WHAT IS THE ICAT?

The Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) helps colleges assess capacity and identify strengths and areas for improvement in light of best practices in seven key areas:

1) Leadership and Vision;
2) Data and Technology;
3) Equity;
4) Teaching and Learning;
5) Engagement and Communication;
6) Strategy and Planning; and
WHAT IS THE ICAT

• The tool provides a structure for stakeholders from all areas of a college to collectively examine critical elements necessary to support student success.

• The ICAT is a qualitative tool that is designed to engage a broad number of college faculty and staff in a discussion about college capacities. It contains 77 questions.

• It demonstrates what the college community knows and thinks about critical areas.

• The survey is delivered electronically and followed up with a Capacity Café (World Café model). Here they analyze the results and create strengths, needs for improvement and potential strategies.
A framework for supporting, accelerating and sustaining systemic change.
How the ICAT is Scored

- 1-4 (minimal, moderate, strong, exemplary)
- The higher the score, the stronger the capacity area
- Also an “I don’t know” response
The Composite Scores

• The colleges receive a composite score for each capacity. While they may receive a mean of 3 on any one capacity, the range of scores can be from 2.5 to 3.4.
The Tool Produces Subscale Scores Within Each Capacity Area

Culture of Evidence

10. Does the Board of Trustees use data to promote the college’s vision for student success?
11. Do college leaders share and use data to inform decision-making?
12. Is there a climate of accountability and expectation of the use of data for decision-making?

• Within each capacity, there are subscales. This example is the subscale for “culture of evidence” under Leadership and Vision.
Then there is a list of questions under each capacity – this is about data and technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Respondents: 153</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Response Distribution by Question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Does relevant data exist to inform decision-making?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does reliable data exist to inform decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are data readily accessible to those who need it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are measures of student success defined, documented and used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are data collected at various points along the student experience continuum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Are student success data translated into meaningful information?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Do data analyses yield insights about the past and future?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many people responded a 1, 2, 3, 4 or don’t know.
How many people by staff type answered “I don’t know” to the list of questions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Administrator (N)</th>
<th>Full-time Faculty (N)</th>
<th>Part-time Faculty (N)</th>
<th>Staff Member (N)</th>
<th>Other (N)</th>
<th>Total (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the college have a clear and compelling definition of equity?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is equity a primary consideration in the college’s student success efforts?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the strategic plan include goals to advance equity?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does the college have a formal entity to coordinate equity efforts?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are equity considerations embedded in college unit plans and practices?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is the college community broadly engaged in conversations about equity?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Does the college consider equity when proposing and evaluating policies and practices?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lastly, the mean score by type of unit and type of employee.
AGGREGATE RESULTS

Since September 2016

- Over 170 Network colleges have administered the ICAT
- Over 22,000 individuals have completed the assessment
- Highest capacity: Leadership & Vision
- Lowest capacity: Data & Technology, Equity
BENEFITS OF COMPLETING THE ASSESSMENT:

- **Insight** into institutional strengths and areas to improve
- **Picture** of what improved capacity looks like through use of examples
- **Broad engagement** of stakeholders from all areas of the college
- **Gaps** in communication and perception
- **Common language** to spark dialogue and engagement in capacity conversations
- **Action steps** to build strength across the seven capacity areas
WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

• Excitement to take the ICAT
• Coach-facilitated Capacity Café experience highly valued as engagement method
• Requests for raw survey data for further analysis
• Ability for multi-campus colleges to administer by campus
• Demand for a demo of the tool, detailed instructions on how to administer the ICAT, and flexibility with the process
• Most value by administering broadly.
• Cultural relevance to TCUs, HBCs and HSIs.
COLLEGES ARE USING ICAT RESULTS FOR...

- Strategic planning
- Accreditation
- Identification of QEP topic
- Building guided pathways
- Identifying areas for professional development
- Capacity building
- Framework for alignment
- Triangulating with CCSSE and other data sources
- Implementing high impact practices
- Educational master planning
- Integration in a comprehensive data and technology assessment
- Campus-wide discussions
- Implementing improvements
Use for Accreditation
Major Challenges Relating to Accreditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Area</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Proving it is adequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcomes for leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluating if leadership is responsible for student success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Learning outcomes assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proving improvements in teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tying assessment back to student success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Educating the college community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying equity groups and gaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking a stand on equity and moving forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data and Technology</td>
<td>Using it for decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supporting all college initiatives with data and technology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Challenges Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Area</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement and Communication</td>
<td>Actually engaging a significant number of faculty and staff in the accreditation process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicating critical issues to faculty and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting opinions from the “right” people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies and Practice</td>
<td>Doing a policy review to make sure they are student success focused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying strong and weak practices to improve institutional quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy and Planning</td>
<td>Getting feedback on strategy and planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaging a significant number in strategy and planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proving improvements in institutional quality.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ALIGNMENT TO ACCREDITATION

• All sections have a potential to inform action and improvements and provide data (mostly qualitative) that can be used in accreditation.

• But here are the major ways it can be used.

• **The process** – the seven regional accrediting agencies have some variation in accreditation standards or criteria but they have all adopted a cycle or process (often referred to as “closing the loop”) for colleges to use through the self-study or compliance certification process.
THE PROCESS INCLUDES:

- Identifying goals or outcomes in each area of the college;
- Establishing “acceptable” levels of performance or expected outcomes or benchmarks;
- Using some form of assessment of performance;
- Analyzing and discussing the results of the assessment among relevant stakeholders;
- Using the analysis of results to inform action, improve instructional programs and support services, make changes to policy, and establish appropriate interventions;
- Demonstrating improvements in student performance, completion, stated outcomes, and institutional quality.
ACCREDITATION IS MOVING TO A STUDENT SUCCESS MODEL .... IT IS THE FUTURE.
PUSH FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools - The institution defines measures of student success and levels of achievement appropriate to its mission, modalities and locations of instruction, and student body, including any specifically recruited populations. These measures include rates of progression, retention, transfer, and graduation; default and loan repayment rates; licensure passage rates; and employment (8.6).
The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools -
The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

- The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
- The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
- The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
- The institution’s processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice (4.C.).
PUSH FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Middle States Commission on Higher Education - An institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success (IV).
PUSH FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

The Accrediting Commission on Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges -
The institution disaggregates and analyzes learning outcomes and achievement for subpopulations of students. When the institution identifies performance gaps, it implements strategies, which may include allocation or reallocation of human, fiscal and other resources, to mitigate those gaps; evaluates the efficacy of those strategies; (I.B.6.).
SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

1. Split into groups of 3.
2. Each will have a handout to work through (read scenario and questions, then look at ICAT results).
3. Take 30 minutes and then we will share what you decided.
WHAT ARE SOME WEAKNESSES OF THE ICAT?

• Based on opinions and discussion.
• Response can be small, not everyone’s opinions.
• Lots of people don’t know what is going on at the college – but should they? It is okay if they don’t know about some things but not others.
• Just because people don’t know it is happening doesn’t mean it isn’t happening.
• Qualitative data are hard to evaluate and use.
WHAT THE ICAT IS NOT

• A replacement for direct learning outcomes assessment in courses, programs, student services and administrative areas.

• A quantitative tool that can be benchmarked to compare colleges to each other.

• A tool with psychometric properties that measures constructs.
STRENGTHS AND HOW IT SHOULD BE USED

1. As an externally developed assessment tool that is used nationally and can be used as a pre-test/post-test measure.

2. As an internal environmental scanning tool to produce broad areas of focus for strategic planning.

3. As a facilitator of broad engagement and critical discussions about institutional issues.

4. As a venue for discussion, analysis, and strategy to determine the quality issues the college.

5. As a tool to address the recent changes in focus toward student success (**most important)**.
TO USE THE ICAT FOR ACCREDITATION

1. Document the steps in the process of planning, administering, and analyzing the results of the ICAT;
2. Identify the strategies used in selecting key individuals or groups to take the assessment or be involved in the discussion of results;
3. Take detailed meeting notes during each ICAT event;
4. Identify action items adopted as a result of the assessment in as much detail as possible;
5. Delineate how the college moved from assessment to strategy to action;
6. Identify a follow-up process or evaluation for each strategy or action item (close the loop);
7. Include the college’s accreditation liaison in the ICAT assessment process.
ALSO FOR QEP AND AQIP ACTION PROJECT SELECTION

• Assess and build on strengths.
• Seek to improve some aspect of student learning or student learning environment.
• Engage the college community broadly in topic selection.
• Set clear and measurable goals.
• Align goals with institutional objectives, planning and priorities (strategies).
• Create action plans or strategies.
Some Additional Considerations

1. Colleges and universities need to align and integrate accreditation with ongoing planning, evaluation, and improvement efforts.

2. They need to document the methods of providing evidence of the work going on at their institutions.

3. While assessment tools will probably never exist to provide valid and reliable measures of the undefined and unpredictable nature of student behavior, decision-making of faculty and staff, and improvements in institutional quality, the ICAT will provide documentation of the process to improve capacity across seven broad areas of the institution.

4. Colleges can compare themselves in light of best practices on each item of the tool and over time.

5. If used appropriately, including good documentation, the process of administering the ICAT and analyzing the results can result in supplemental evidence of compliance with accreditation standards.
QUESTIONS

• Besides accreditation, has this exercise shown you any other way you could use the ICAT results?
• What is your experience with the assessment and Capacity Café at your college?
• How can we strengthen it?

• DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?
Thank you!

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