Opportunities from Recommendations

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Temperature Check

- Who is in the room?
- What brings you to this breakout session?
- How many of you have ever received a recommendation from ACCJC?
When a College Receives a Recommendation from ACCJC

- There are generally two types of recommendations: recommendations for improvement or recommendations for compliance.
- Recommendations for compliance may be subject to the two-year rule.
- While often recommendations may not be entirely a surprise, still receiving a recommendation from ACCJC may evoke a series of initial reactions.
Once the Emotional Response is Processed...

Recommendations can provide an opportunity to:

- Make structural changes to improve the college
- Engage teams of constituent groups to assess the recommendations
- Examine the details of the recommendation to determine if there are other ways the college can improve
- Examine governance structures to determine how to address the recommendations
- Identify key people who are willing and able to champion change.
How Can Colleges Proceed to Effect Change?

- Be Honest with yourselves. Recognizing areas that need improvements.
- Be Transparent. Make sure the college understands the areas that need improvement.
- Assemble a team: Find individual who are committed to finding solutions.
- Seize the opportunity. While examining structures to address recommendations, take advantage of the opportunity to effect other needed changes.
Specific strategies that successful colleges use to not only address recommendations, but to effect meaningful institutional change can be fit into three main areas:

1) Plan of action
2) People committed to success
3) Access to resources
Plan of Action

Communication!

- Communicate to the broad campus community what the recommendations are and what they mean
- Explain whether they are recommendations for improvement or for compliance
- Communicate how the college plans to address the recommendations
Examples of Success Stories

- What worked (and what didn’t) when colleges worked on recommendations?
Plan of Action

- Assign tasks to committees using existing committee structures when possible
- Create strategies and timelines
- List a person responsible
- Broad based communication especially from the committees assigned the work
- Involve all constituent groups across the college. Since accreditation belongs to the institution, assure that the whole institution is involved
- Document the work. The response to recommendations must be addressed in a Follow-Up Report or a Midterm Report and evidence will be needed to support it.
People Committed to Success

Those assigned to committees or workgroups and especially those who are leading the work have the following characteristics:

- The ability to facilitate dialog and rally the troops
- An understanding of accreditation and college operations
- Good planning and organizational skills
- Openness, transparency, and trustworthiness
- Resourceful
Strategies and Timelines:

- Identify Strategies and timelines based on the type of recommendation: Recommendations for improvement vs. recommendations for compliance

- Timelines for compliance recommendations must be aligned with the timeline for the Follow-Up Report, typically subject to the two-year rule

- Timelines or improvement recommendations may need to be aligned with the timeline for the Midterm Report
Access to Resources

- Access the expertise of leaders, faculty and staff, and committees
- Look to peer colleges for advice
- Consult Resources from the ASCCC
- Reach out to the Accrediting Commission
The Payoff

Colleges that have employed these strategies have had success in addressing recommendations and in some cases, effecting some level of institutional change.
Avoid the temptation to:

- Do nothing or delay responding hoping the recommendation will go away
- Just fix the problem yourself or hire a consultant to fix it. Collaboration between constituent groups is the only way to achieve lasting change
- Get defensive, insisting that nothing is wrong
- Providing a minimal response (just checking the boxes)
When your college receives recommendations, it can be viewed as an opportunity to examine the college structures as a way to improve the institution.

Seize the opportunity!
Questions?