

Accreditation, Assessment and the Future:
Implications for Truman State University

1. Linking Accreditation and Assessment of Student Learning
2. Accountability – “No College Left Behind”
3. Calls for Transparency
4. The Threat of Greater Federal Intervention
 - Proposals to eliminate or eviscerate regional accrediting bodies
 - Imposition of standardized accountability measures (comparing apples to oranges)
 - Higher education, like other sectors of the economy, is “too big to fail.” Federal funds will likely produce greater expectations for accountability
 - *“Gaining accreditation today is remarkably similar to gaining accreditation a century ago. While the list of inputs measured has changed somewhat due to technological and social developments, the core issue is essentially the same: is enough money being spent on a given list of inputs? The failure of this approach should be apparent if we acknowledge that the federal government is not providing in excess of \$117 billion per year to American colleges just so we can make sure that libraries are big enough and that college professors have Ph.D’s. The government—as well as the taxpayers it represents—expects to see a return on its investment in the form of substantial gains in knowledge and proficiency in a student’s field of study.”* (Gillen, Bennett, and Vedder 2010, p. 10)
5. Emergence of Voluntary Organizations and Systems
 - National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
 - Voluntary System of Accountability
6. Anticipated Changes in HLC Processes
 - Pathways Demonstration Project
 - Truman’s Potential Involvement
7. Program Accreditation/Certification
 - NCATE merger with Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)
 - Professional organizational criteria and institutional constraints
8. Truman’s Assessment Program

Selected Players

- American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA)
- American Council on Education (ACE)
- American Society for Quality (Education Division)
- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)
- Center for College Affordability and Productivity
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation
- Higher Learning Commission – North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI)
<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2010/08/23/qt#236220>
- National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

What Does This Tell Us?

- Truman must not lose its strong focus upon assessment
- Enhance program assessment while maintaining appropriate levels of institutional assessment
- Accountability matters even more than it did in the past
- Never let accountability trump improvement
- Truman must again be a voice in national assessment efforts
- Staff support for institutional research and assessment is critical
- Must allocate resources carefully, weighing costs and benefits of assessment against other needs

Selected Reading List

- American Council of Trustees and Alumni (2007, July). *Why accreditation doesn't work and what policymakers can do about it*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Bok, D. (2006). *Our underachieving colleges*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2003). *Statement of mutual responsibilities for student learning outcomes: Accreditation, institutions, and programs*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (2003). *Regional accreditation and student learning: Principles for good practices*. Author.
- Gillen, A., Bennett, D., & Vedder, R. (2010). *The inmates running the asylum?* Washington, DC: Center for College Affordability and Productivity.
- Provezis, S. (2010). *Regional accreditation and student learning outcomes: Mapping the territory* (Occasional Paper #6). Champaign, IL: National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Schray, V. (2006). *Assuring quality in higher education: Recommendations for Improving Accreditation* (Issue Paper #14). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- U.S. Department of Education (2006). *A test of leadership: Charting the future of U.S. higher education*. Washington, DC: Author.