

Community College of Allegheny County

From Rags to a Rich Assessment Quilt

SCUP Mid-Atlantic
Regional Conference

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Introductions

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- Community College of Allegheny County

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CCAC Fast Facts

- Allegheny County: 1.3 million residents
- 4 campuses & 6 centers serving
- 29,799 Credit students
- 35,016 Non-credit students
- 58% women
- 59% part time
- 53% in occupational technical programs
- 2nd largest producer of registered nurses - 462
- 4th largest producer of health professionals - 654

Introduction

- Audience
 - Middle States institutions
 - Preparing for self-study
 - Developing assessment plans and processes
 - Responding to recommendations, warnings, etc
- Success?
 - Our story will provide you with a practical framework for creating your own assessment plans/processes

Overview

- Middle States expectations for accreditation
- Gaps
- Consequences
- Closing gaps
- Moving forward

Middle States expectations for accreditation

Assessment Processes Answer Fundamental Questions

- **#7 Institutional**
 - As an institutional community, how well are we collectively doing what we say we are doing?
 - How do we support student learning, a fundamental aspect of institutional effectiveness?
 - Is the institution fulfilling its mission and achieving its goals?
- **#14 Student Learning**
 - Are our students learning what we want them to learn?



The Four Step Process

#7 Institutional	#14 Student Learning
1. Developing clearly articulated written statements, expressed in observable terms, of key institutional and unit-level goals	1. Developing clearly articulated written statements, expressed in observable terms, of key learning outcomes
2. Designing intentional objectives or strategies to achieve those goals	2. Designing courses, programs, and experiences that provide intentional opportunities for students to achieve those learning outcomes
3. Assessing achievement of those key goals	3. Assessing student achievement of those key learning outcomes
4. Using the results of those assessments to improve programs and services	4. Using the results of those assessments to improve teaching and learning



Fundamental Elements of Assessment Processes

#7 Institutional	#14 Student Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> written institutional (strategic) plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly articulated statements of expected student learning outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> documented, organized, and sustained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> documented, organized, and sustained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in institutional planning, resource allocation, and renewal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence that student learning assessment information is shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and is used to improve teaching
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assessment results that provide sufficient, convincing evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> documented use of student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment.

Characteristics of Assessment Processes

- Useful
- Cost effective
- Reasonably accurate and truthful
- Planned
- Organized, systematized and sustained

Changes in Standard 7 (Institutional Assessment) between 2004 and 2006

2004	2006
Builds upon the six previous standards	Builds upon <u>all</u> other standards
A written assessment plan and process	A documented, organized and sustained assessment process

Gaps and Consequences

Self-Study Synopsis

- ...the Team could not affirm compliance with Standard 7 due to:
 - the absence of a written assessment plan
 - the absence of evidence of periodic assessment of institutional effectiveness that addresses the total range of educational offerings, services and processes
 - the lack of evidence indicating the use of assessment results to improve and gain efficiencies in administrative services and processes
 - the absence of a written institutional (strategic) plan that reflects consideration of data use from assessment outcomes

SOURCE: Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees and Students of the Community College of Allegheny County. Pittsburgh Pennsylvania by An Evaluation Team Representing The Middle States Commission on Higher Education, April 2005



Self-Study Synopsis

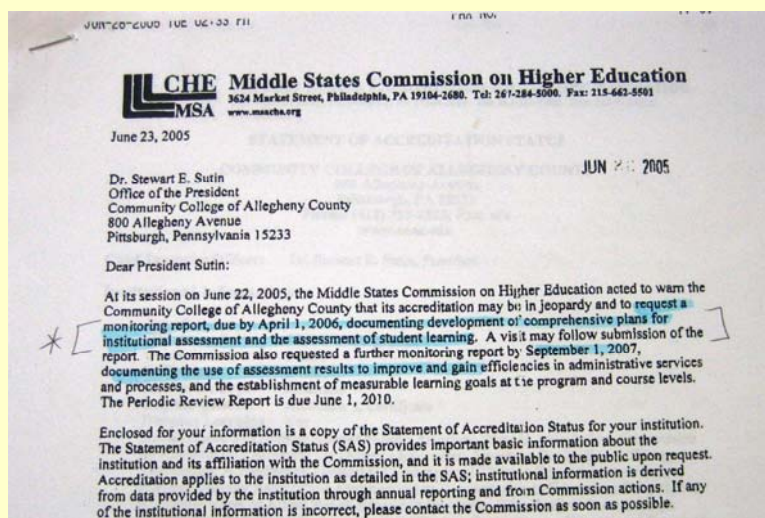
- The institution does not meet Standard 14.
 - "CCAC, by its own admission in the Self-Study, has not instituted a comprehensive assessment plan or process that measures student learning
 - "In a report dated June 6, 1996 the findings of a self-study document and the visitation team's report indicated the need for CCAC to assess student learning"

SOURCE: Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees and Students of the Community College of Allegheny County. Pittsburgh Pennsylvania by An Evaluation Team Representing The Middle States Commission on Higher Education, April 2005



Assessment Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive institutional strategic plan, linking planning to decision-making, budgeting and institutional assessment.
2. Develop appropriate metrics that will clearly link strategic objectives to indicators of effectiveness
3. Give a high priority to developing an Institutional Assessment Plan that will include details as to how the College will assess its institutional effectiveness as well as the effectiveness of its educational offerings and support services.
4. Develop a comprehensive method of institutional assessment that effectively incorporates measures of student learning outcomes so that appropriate resources can be dedicated towards positive change.
5. Develop a plan to assess and systematically collect learning outcomes data for academic programs and courses.
6. Use program review results continually to assess and improve teaching and learning in support of student success.
7. Assess and systematically collect the learning outcomes data for the College's General Education program.
8. Track and monitor the improvements made to teaching and learning that result from the assessment of the General Education program.
9. Establish an official college definition of assessment of student learning.



Warning

- The Commission acts to Warn an institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy when the institution is not in compliance with one or more standards
- A monitoring report is required to demonstrate that the institution has made appropriate improvements to bring itself into compliance
- Warning indicates that the Commission believes that...the institution has the capacity to make appropriate improvements within a reasonable period of time and...has the capacity to sustain itself in the long term.
- The institution retains its accredited status while the warning is in effect.

How did this happen to us?

- Confusion about assessment
- Unclear ownership internally - hot potato
- Lack of mandate internally
- Waiting around for the "right time" to start
- No written plan
- Could it happen to you too?

What does it mean to be placed on warning?

- Confuses your constituents and stakeholders
- Messy
- Stressful
- Focusing
- Opportunity for new leaders to emerge within the organization



Closing gaps



Getting Back on Our Horse

- Formed Two Teams
 - Institutional and Student Learning (faculty driven)
 - Eventually added a third (Student Services)
- Began with an Education Period
 - Reading and discussion for several months
 - Agreed on terms
 - Attended conferences
 - Local Middle States Workshops
 - Other regional and national conferences
- Advice: Find your way to Philadelphia
- Note: It will take resources!

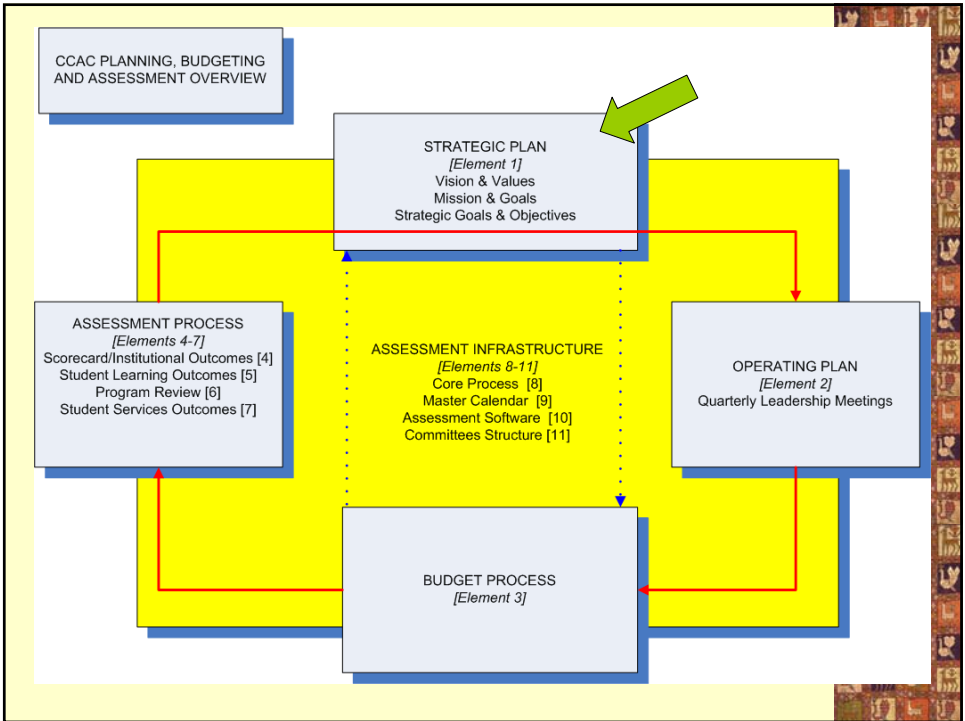
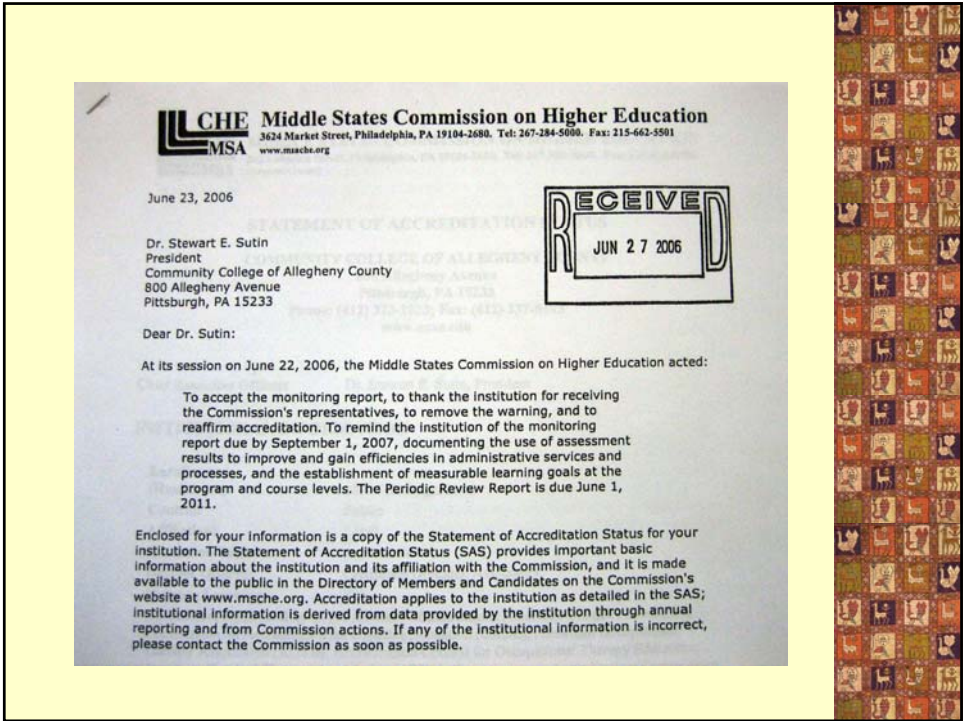


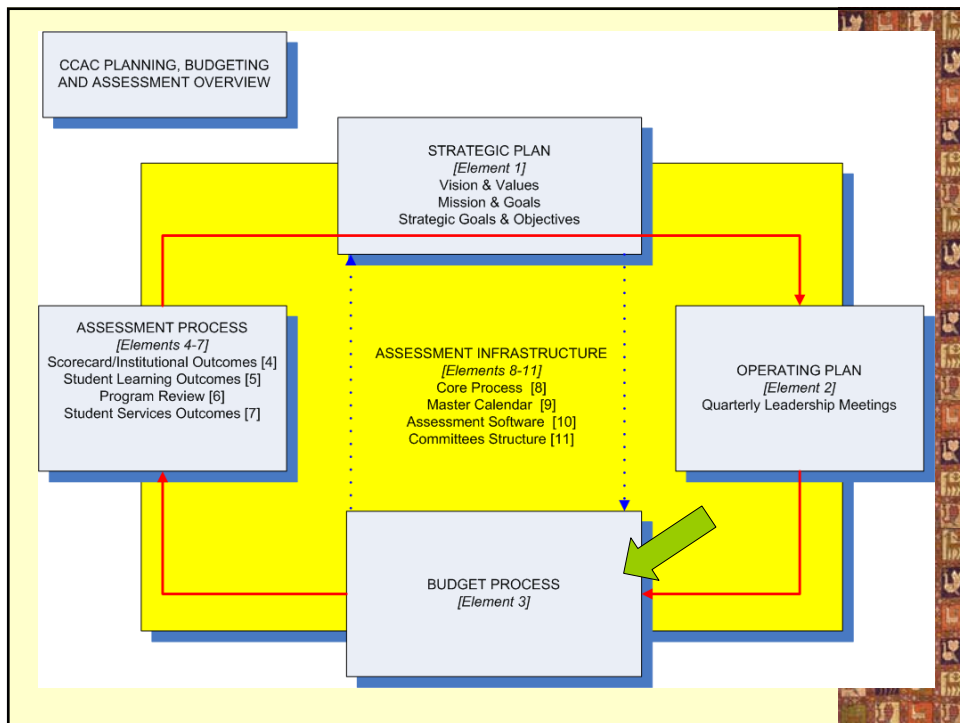
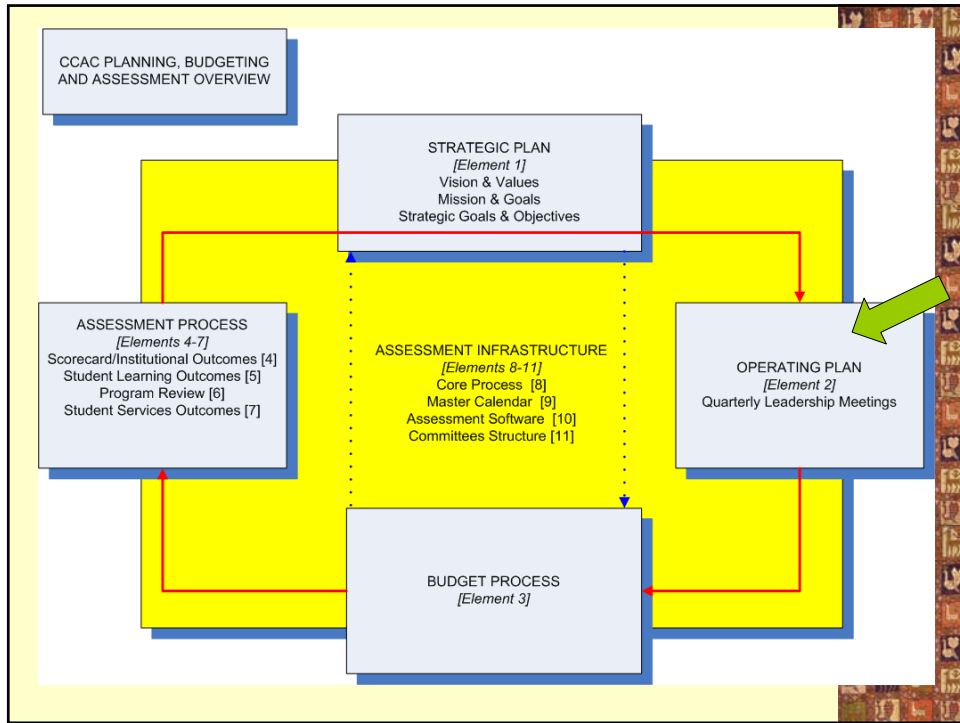
First Year Actions

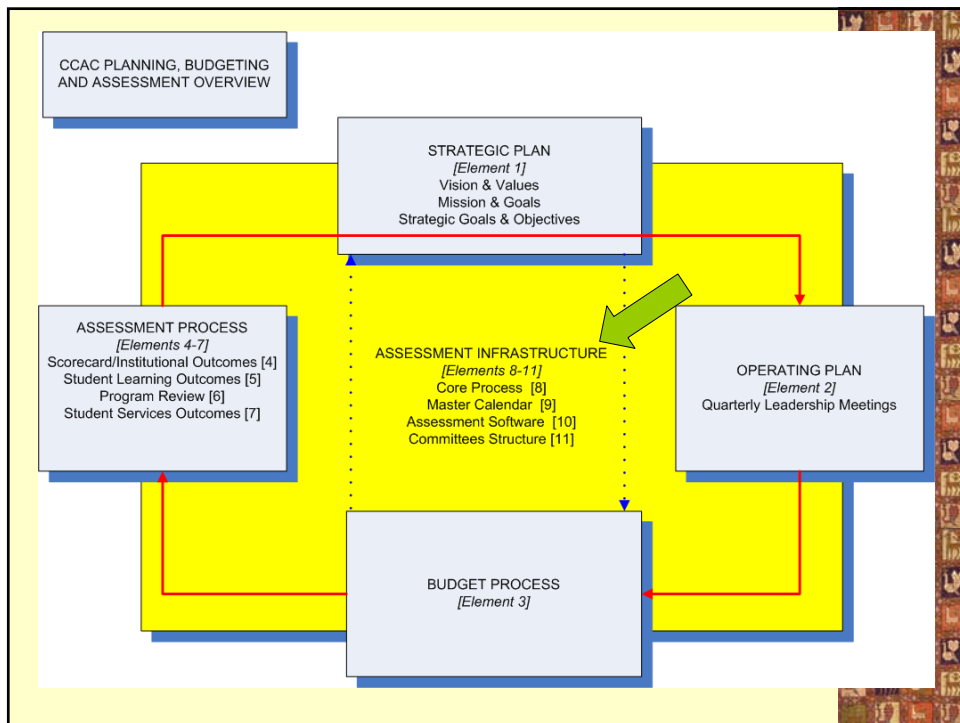
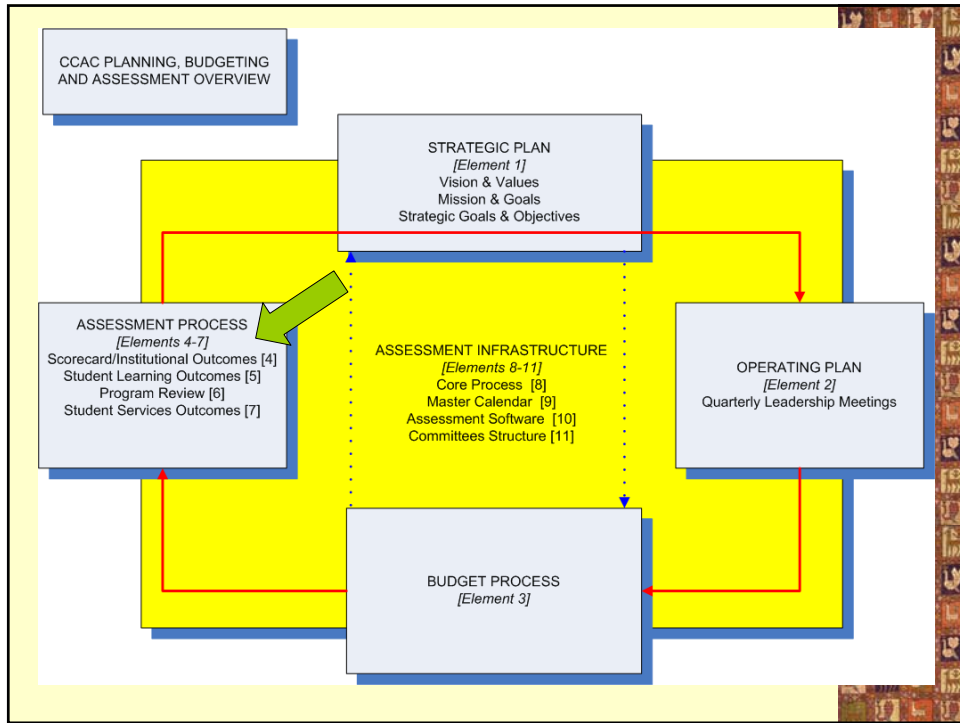
- Institutional
 - Strategic Plan
 - Formed committee
 - Web site
 - Assessment Inventory
 - Information gathering
 - Defined institutional assessment
 - Articulated an assessment philosophy
 - Conducted campus workshops
- Student Learning
 - Formed committee
 - Training for ASL
 - Adopted an official definition of assessment and defined terminology
 - Created a process for program assessment
 - Created General Education goals
 - Offered campus workshops:
 - program assessment process
 - classroom assessment
 - Conducted assessment at the class-level

SOURCE: Monitoring Report to the Middle States
Commission on Higher Education, April 2006









Assessment Plan & Process Template

Element #:
Description:
Linkages:
Status:
Action Items



Element 4: Scorecard

Description:

The April 2005 Middle States evaluation team visit yielded the following recommendation: Develop appropriate metrics that will clearly link strategic objectives to indicators of effectiveness. In addition, an objective of the College in its 05-06 operating plan was the development of a “dashboard” of performance indicators. To meet these expectations the college has adopted a scorecard approach [Appendix 4.A] derived from The Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). The scorecard represents a constant set of “vital signs” or strategic indicators that are institutional in scope. The scorecard is organized into six measurement categories that are aligned with the college enduring goals from the strategic plan. These are 1. Learning 2.Student service 3.Community outreach 4.Workforce 5.Lifelong and 6.Resource stewardship. An additional three categories, referred to as institutional imperatives were established by the college president. These are: 7. Diversity 8.Technology and 9.Integrity. These indicators tend to take a long range perspective and function more like lagging indicators. Scorecard measures are of interest to the college’s external stakeholders. They may be shared with the board of trustees and be referenced in the College annual report to the public. The scorecard builds when possible upon existing data collection efforts such as IPEDS and the National Community College Benchmarking Project and the accountability mandates of Act 46. Scorecard data are used in quarterly planning progress meetings of the President’s cabinet.

Linkages:

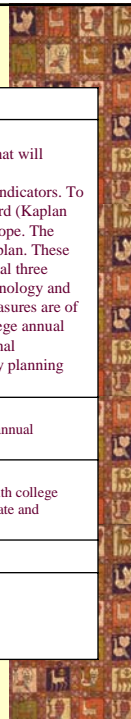
The scorecard contains strategic indicators and is thus most closely connected with the strategic plan (Element 1). It also supports the annual assessment, planning (Element 2) and budgeting cycles (Element 3).

Status:

The last full update of the scorecard produced in January 2008. The scorecard is being actively updated and revised based on dialog with college senior vice presidents and the availability of fresh data from IPEDS and the National Community College Benchmarking Project. Update and maintain scorecard according to a production schedule [Summer '07]

Action Items

- Finalize and develop consensus on scorecard contents [Fall '07]
- Develop protocols to improve integration of the scorecard and the quarterly review meeting process. [June '08]
- Establish protocol for scorecard review by trustees on an ongoing basis. [June '08]



Assessment of Student Learning (ASL) Overview

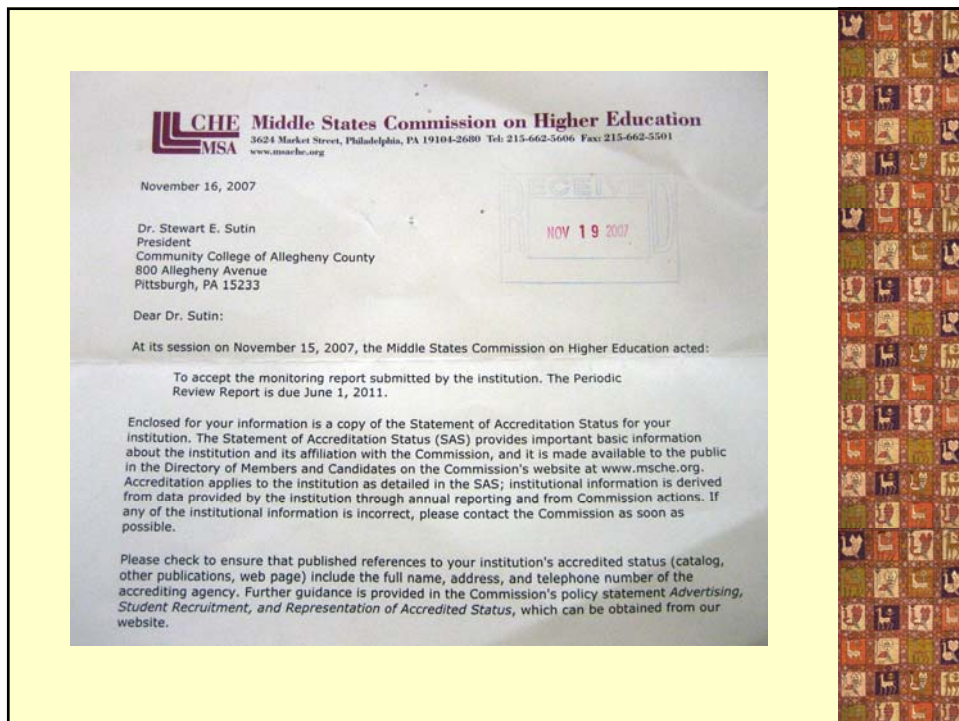
Institution-level	ASL committee conducts assessment of six General Education goals
Program-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each program/discipline conducts an annual assessment • Each program/discipline completes a comprehensive program review once every five years
Course/Classroom-level	Voluntarily reported by faculty

Master Calendar

	ASSESSMENT	ECONOMIC STIPEND	CAPITAL BUDGET	OPERATING BUDGET	OPERATING PLANNING
Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact book (Bottom Lines) updated • Conduct ACT student survey (on alternating year cycles) 			2) Baseline budget instructions and worksheets sent to campus departments via business offices	Q1 Operating Plan Review
Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin collection of licensure and certification exam data. • Conduct graduate survey (May grads) 		1) Analysis of campus capital outlay requests by budget office	3) The department head completes budget request and justifications and submits it to the business office	
Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensure and certification findings available 	CCAC receives PDE decision on September petition	2) Analysis distributed to campuses with worksheets	4) Campus budgets reviewed, possibly modified and approved by campus CEO	
Jan		Enter December list into Datatel	3) Campus process creates prioritized capital requests	5) Campus draft budget finalized	Scorecard Updated Q2 Operating Plan Review

Assessment Info System

- Process and document management
- Resources (money and people)
- Inevitable (alternative = managing paper)
- Option did not exist when we began
- Partnership with info tech division of your college



Moving forward

Where are we today?

- Off warning
- Closed the loop
- In leadership transition
 - Slows the change process
- Looking down the road toward PRR

Periodic Review Objectives

1. To assess the impact of significant major developments, changes, or challenges subsequent to the last evaluation
2. To assess the institution's **response to recommendations** resulting from the previous evaluation
3. To review the institution's enrollment trends, financial status, and enrollment and financial projections
4. To determine the current **status of the implementation of plans for the assessment of institutional effectiveness and the assessment of student learning outcomes** (accreditation standards 7 and 14)
5. To assess the extent to which **linked institutional planning and budgeting processes** are in place

Conclusions

- Assessment is not just for accreditation
- It is the right thing to do
- Institutions of our complexity need organized methods:
 - to move us from the past
 - position us to fulfill our missions and serve our constituents in the future
 - to make best use of the substantial resources in our trust
- Don't wait. Start small and build on success.

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