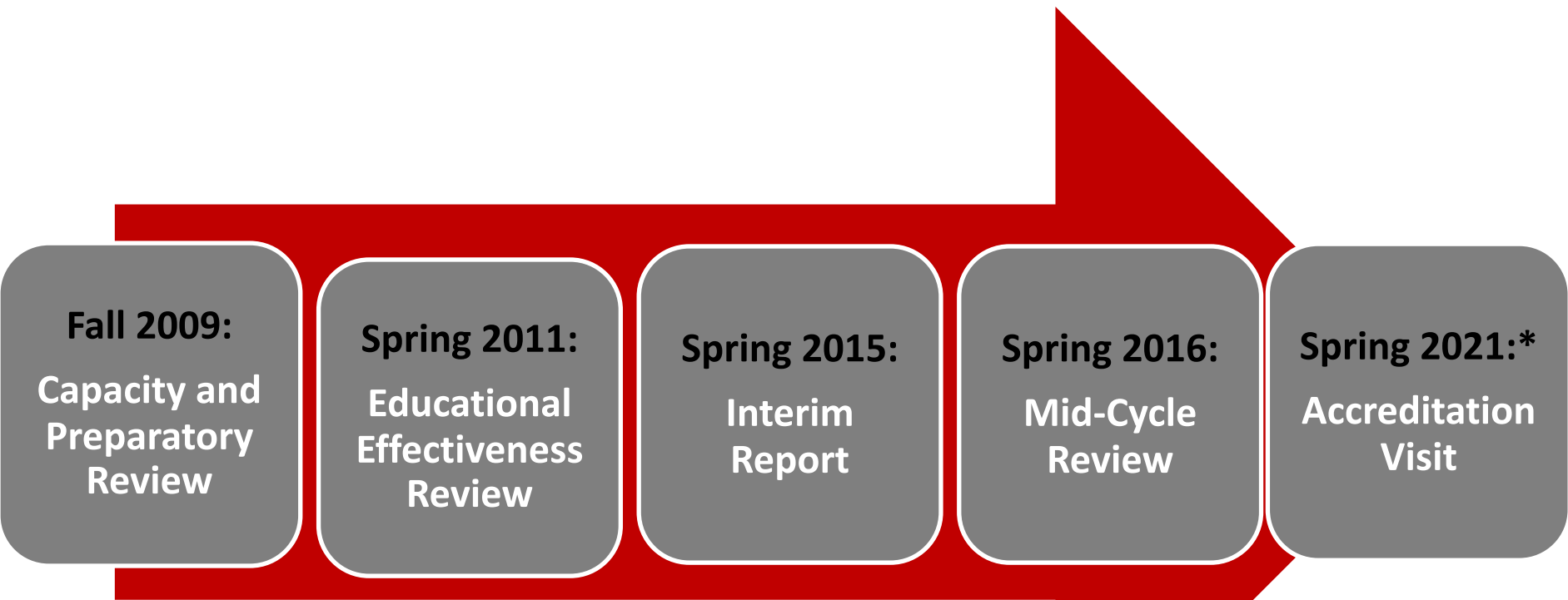# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA

Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation
of Accreditation
Presentation for the Provost's Council

October 14, 2019

Barbara Gross Davis– Vice President
WASC Senior College and University Commission

# UH Mānoa's WSCUC Timeline

**Fall 2009:** Capacity and Preparatory Review

**Spring 2011:** Educational Effectiveness Review

**Spring 2015:** Interim Report

**Spring 2016:** Mid-Cycle Review

**Spring 2021:*** Accreditation Visit

*Update: Visit postponed to November 2021

# Agenda for the Day

- <span style="color:red">The changing context for accreditation</span>
- 2013 WSCUC Standards and Criteria for Review
- Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) of accreditation
- The institutional review process
- Commission action

# Changing Context for Accreditation

- Greatly increased expectations for institutional accountability and consumer protection

- Demands for improved academic standards and student performance (as measured by retention, graduation rates and post-graduation job placement)

- New fiscal realities making cost-effectiveness a paramount issue for WSCUC and its constituents

- Calls for risk-based assessment, for both low-risk and high-risk institutions

# Challenges for Higher Education and Accreditation
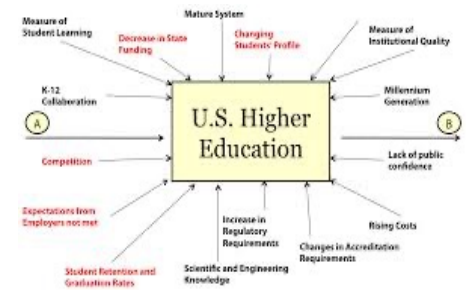


- Low graduation rates
- High student debt/high default rates
- Difficulty in transferring credits
- Dissatisfaction with quality of education/low levels of learning
- Rapid growth of online education
- Practices of the for-profit industry
- Increased federal regulation
- Concern about the value of higher ed

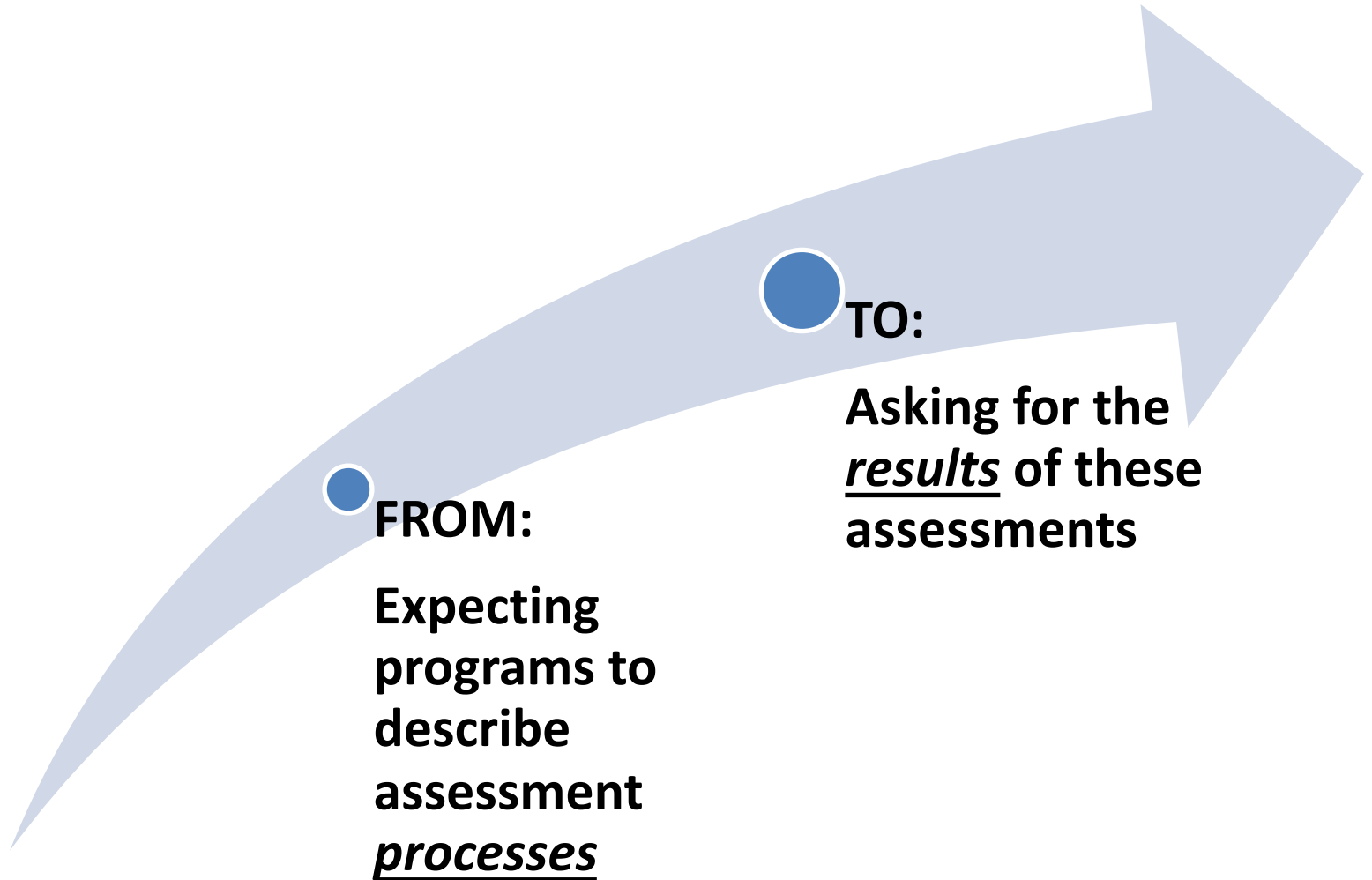# Challenges for Higher Education and Accreditation (continued)

- Changing demographics, including older, working, more diverse students

- Swirl: majority of students attend more than one institution

- Development of competency-based programs

- Shrinking support for public universities and trend to privatization

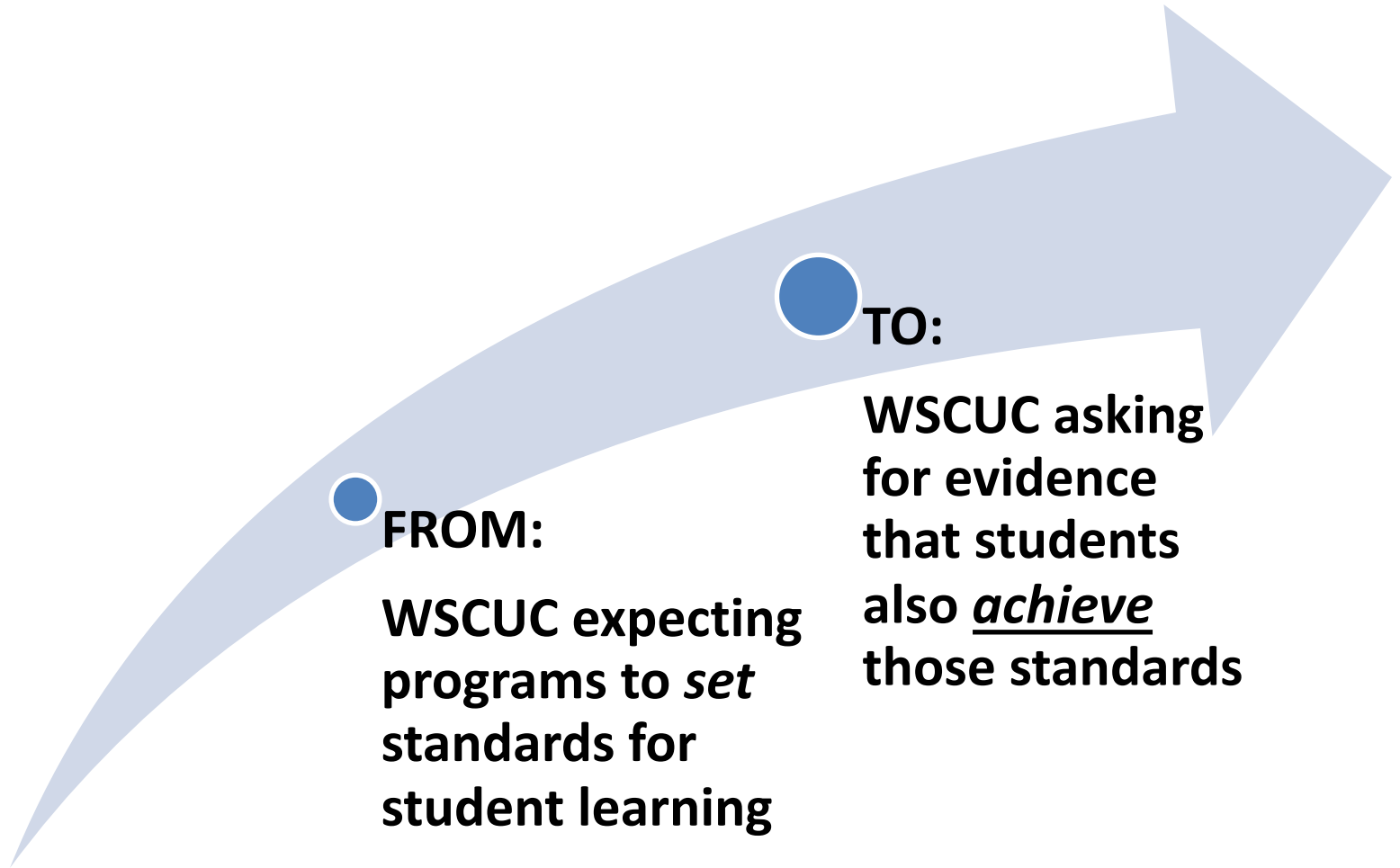- Strong consumer demand for degrees leading to jobs

# How Accreditation is Changing

| ROLES OF ACCREDITATION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Core Functions of Accreditation** | **Compliance Centered** | **Improvement Centered** | **Accountability/Quality Assurance Centered** |
| Focus of Review | All standards applied to assure compliance | Key areas selected and approved by accreditor for improvement | Specific areas identified as part of all reviews to address common policy issues—e.g., retention/graduation rates, student learning outcomes |
| Demonstration of Effectiveness | Must demonstrate standards are met at least at minimum level | Simplified compliance review and primary emphasis on recommended improvements | Standards of performance set by institutions, and, where appropriate, comparative indicators used |
| Public Reporting and Transparency | Public announcement of grant of accreditation | Reports internally circulated for improvement; accrediting action publicly reported | Meaningful and clear public information about institutional performance and commission actions reported |

# A Learning Curve
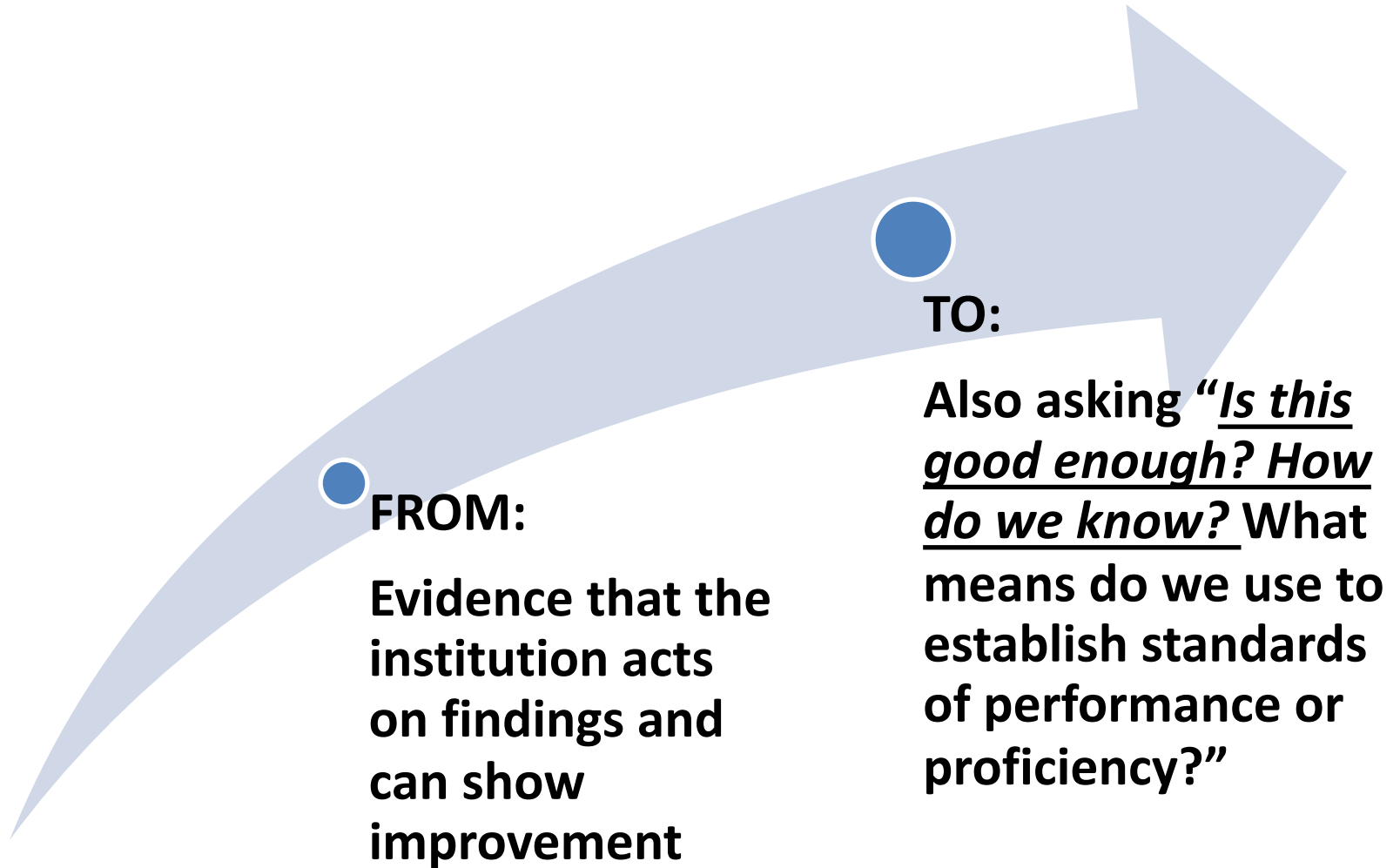
**FROM:**

**Expecting programs to describe assessment *processes***

**TO:**

**Asking for the *results* of these assessments**

# Another Learning Curve

**FROM:**

WSCUC expecting programs to *set* standards for student learning

**TO:**

WSCUC asking for evidence that students also *achieve* those standards

# Yet Another Learning Curve

**TO:**

Also asking "*Is this good enough? How do we know?* What means do we use to establish standards of performance or proficiency?"

**FROM:**

Evidence that the institution acts on findings and can show improvement
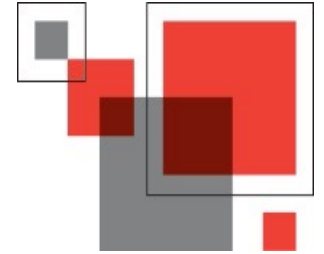
# Agenda for the Day

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# 2013 Core Commitments and Standards of Accreditation
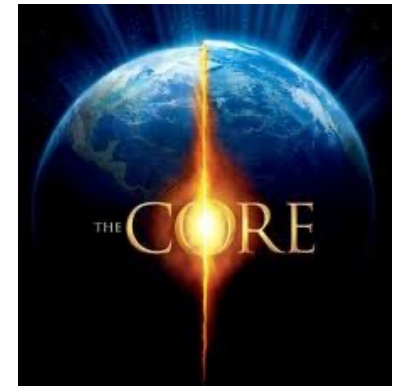
## Three Core Commitments

## Four Standards

- Criteria for Review (CFR)
- Guidelines

# 2013 Core Commitments

- **Student Learning and Success**

- **Quality and Improvement**

- **Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability**

# Core Commitment: Student Learning and Success

"Institutions have clear educational goals and student learning outcomes….Institutions support the success of all students and seek to understand and improve student success."

# Core Commitment: Quality and Improvement



"Institutions are committed to high standards of quality in all of their educational activities…. Institutions demonstrate the capacity to fulfill their current commitments and future needs and opportunities."

**Core Commitment: Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability**
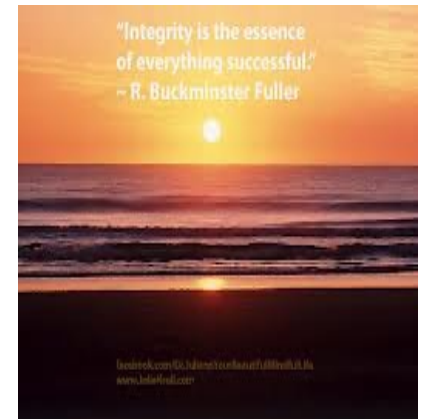


"...Institutions engage in sound business practices, demonstrate institutional integrity, operate in a transparent manner, and adapt to changing conditions."

# 2013 Standards of Accreditation

- Standard 1
- Standard 2
- Standard 3
- Standard 4

# **Standard 1:**

## Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

- *Institutional Purpose*
- *Integrity and Transparency*

# **Standard 2:**

## Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions

- *Teaching and Learning*
- *Scholarship and Creative Activity*
- *Student Learning and Success*

# Standard 3:

Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

- *Faculty and Staff*
- *Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources*
- *Organizational Structures and Decision-making Processes*

# Standard 4:

Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

- *Quality Assurance Processes*
- *Institutional Learning and Improvement*

# Criteria for Review (CFR)

- Provide statements about the meaning of the Standard

- Are cited by institutions in their report, by teams in evaluating institutions, and by the Commission in making decisions

# **Guidelines**

- Show typical ways institutions can put into practice a CFR

- Offer examples of how an institution can address a particular CFR

- Are not requirements or mandatory

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# Description of the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation

- A review process for reaffirmation that is an alternative to the process described in the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation*

- Institutions provide evidence of compliance with the Standards and federal requirements and address one or more self-selected themes to demonstrate educational effectiveness

# Eligibility for the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation



- Institutions show consistent evidence of:
  - Healthy fiscal condition
  - Strong student achievement indicators
  - Sustained quality performance

- Process
  - Institutions that are invited to apply for TPR indicate their interest
  - WSCUC staff conducts eligibility review looking at 30 criteria
  - Commission makes final determination of eligibility for TPR

# Key Elements of the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation

- Approval of TPR in place of usual Institutional Review Process

- Identification of themes

- Institutional self-study and report
  - Four components (1, 2, 8, and 9 of usual components)
  - "Compliance with WSCUC Standards and Federal Requirements"
  - "Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators"

- TPR institutional review process
  - Accreditation Visit
  - Team report (posted on WSCUC website)

- Commission action (posted on WSCUC website)

# Four Components of Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation Institutional Report

1. Introduction: Institutional context
2. Compliance
3. Institution-Specific Themes
4. Conclusion

# "Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation Guide"

- Lists eligibility criteria

- Discusses process for submitting themes

- Describes drafting and submitting institutional report

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# Overview of UH Mānoa's Reaccreditation Process

**INSTITUTION:**

Self-Study & Report

Due 10 weeks before the Accreditation Visit

February 3, 2021*

**TEAM:**

Accreditation Visit
April 14-16, 2021**

**COMMISSION:**

Action

June 2021***

* Report due September 2021, per postponed visit.
** Visit postponed to November 2021
*** Commission Action now scheduled for February 2022

# Timelines

# Timelines

TIMELINE for TPR VISIT

| INSTITUTION: | Full Name |
|---|---|
| VISIT TYPE: | Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation Visit |
| VISIT START DATE: | Tuesday, March 20, 2018 |
| WSCUC STAFF LIAISON: | Firstname Lastname |

We expect that you will communicate throughout the visit process by email and phone, checking in and following up with one another at various points. Please note that these dates are preferred dates but not inflexible. The dates of the visit and of the Commission review are fixed but all other dates may be adjusted. This timeline is to give you a sense of the sequence of events rather than to impose set dates.

| | | TEAM MEMBERS | | WSCUC STAFF | | INSTITUTION STAFF | DATES | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ACTION | Chair | Assistant Chair (AC) | Managers and/or Admin Staff | Vice President or Associate (VP) | Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) | OPTIMAL TIMELINE | TARGET DATE |
| | BEFORE THE VISIT | | | | | | | |
| 1 | WSCUC sends preparation materials to ALO (team roster, timelines, draft schedules, logistics survey, email account information, hosting a visit guide) | - | - | Sends | Receives and reviews | Receives, acknowledges and reviews | 10-12 weeks before visit | |
| 2 | WSCUC sends preparation materials to team (institutional and logistics information, team roster, timelines, worksheets etc.) | Receives and reviews | Receives and reviews | Sends | - | - | 10-12 weeks before visit | |
| 3 | ALO sends the institution's report electronically to WSCUC; WSCUC provides link to team members. | Receives and reviews | Receives and reviews | Receives and reviews | Receives and reviews | Sends | 10 weeks before visit | |

# Institutional Review Process:
## Institutional Report

- Has the institution responded to previous Commission actions?
- Has the institution responded to the four components?
- Has it collected and analyzed data effectively?
- Are its conclusions supported by evidence?
- What are the strengths of the institution?
- Are there problems or potential areas of concern or noncompliance?
- Does the report contain recommendations for further institutional action?

# **Institutional Review Process: The Visit**

- April 14-16, 2021*

- Team comes to campus for three days

- Team report and recommendation sent to WSCUC Commission for action

*Visit postponed to November 9-12, 2021

# Institutional Review Process: **TPR Teams**

- Five peer evaluators on a team

- Normal evaluator selection process as other review types

- Peer evaluators will be trained using TPR Evaluator Guide, online courses, and on-site workshop

# Agenda for the Day

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# **Commission Review**

- Commission Panel reads report and documentation including institution's written response, talks with institutional representatives at Commission meeting

- Panel makes recommendation to Commission, and Commission acts

- Staff finalizes draft action letter on behalf of Commission

- Letter and team report are publicly available on WSCUC website

- Link provided on WSCUC website, if desired, to institution's response to team report