New Ideas for Successful Accreditation:

A Comparison of Standards From Regional Accrediting Bodies

Kristina M. Cragg, Ph.D.
Asst. to the President for Strategic Research & Analysis
Strategic Research and Analysis
Valdosta State University
kmcragg@valdosta.edu

Michael M. Black, Ed.D.
Data Information Analyst
Strategic Research and Analysis
Valdosta State University
mmblack@valdosta.edu

Ross A. Griffith, M.Ed.
Director of Institutional Research and Academic Administration
Wake Forest University
griffith@wfu.edu

Nijah E. Bryant
Research Data Analyst Coordinator
Institutional Research and Planning
Savannah State University
bryantn@savannahstate.edu

Presentations and handouts are available at:
http://www.valdosta.edu/sra/presentations.shtml

Association for Institutional Research 2011 Annual Forum
Toronto, Ontario, Canada – May 23, 2011

We will discuss…

- Motivation for the work and presentation
- Background of the six regional accrediting agencies
- Differences between regional agencies for three standards
- Conclusion and recommendations
- Questions and comments
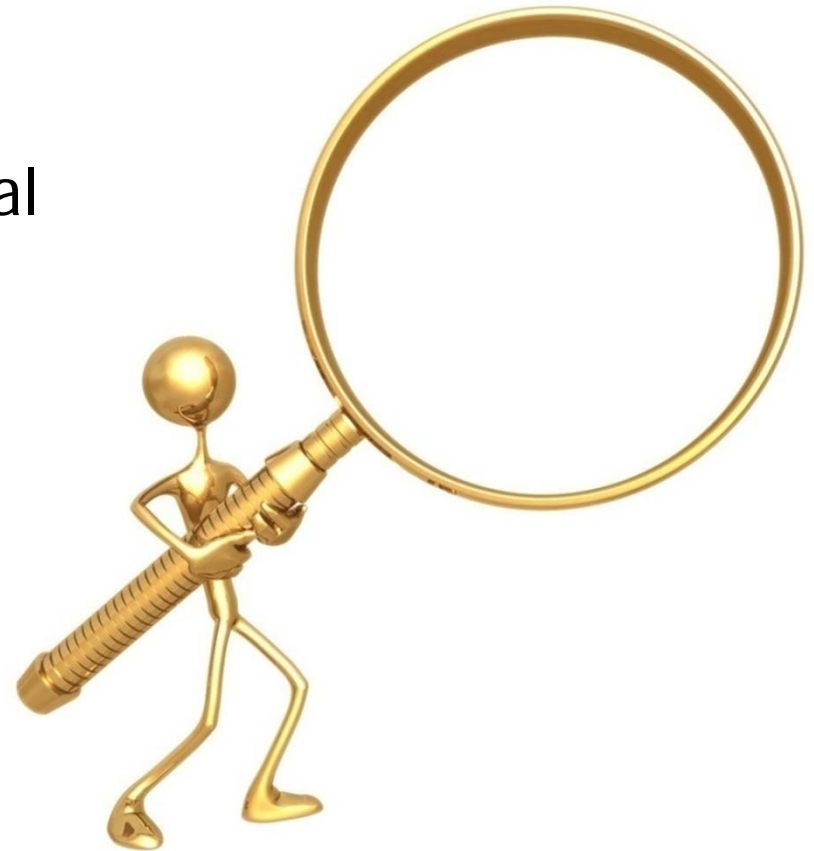
The Presenters and Their Institutions

- Kristina M. Cragg and Michael M. Black
  - Representing a four-year, regional state university with 13,000 students
- Ross A. Griffith
  - Representing a four-year, private university with 7,100 students
- Nijah E. Bryant
  - Representing a four-year, public, HBCU with 4,000 students

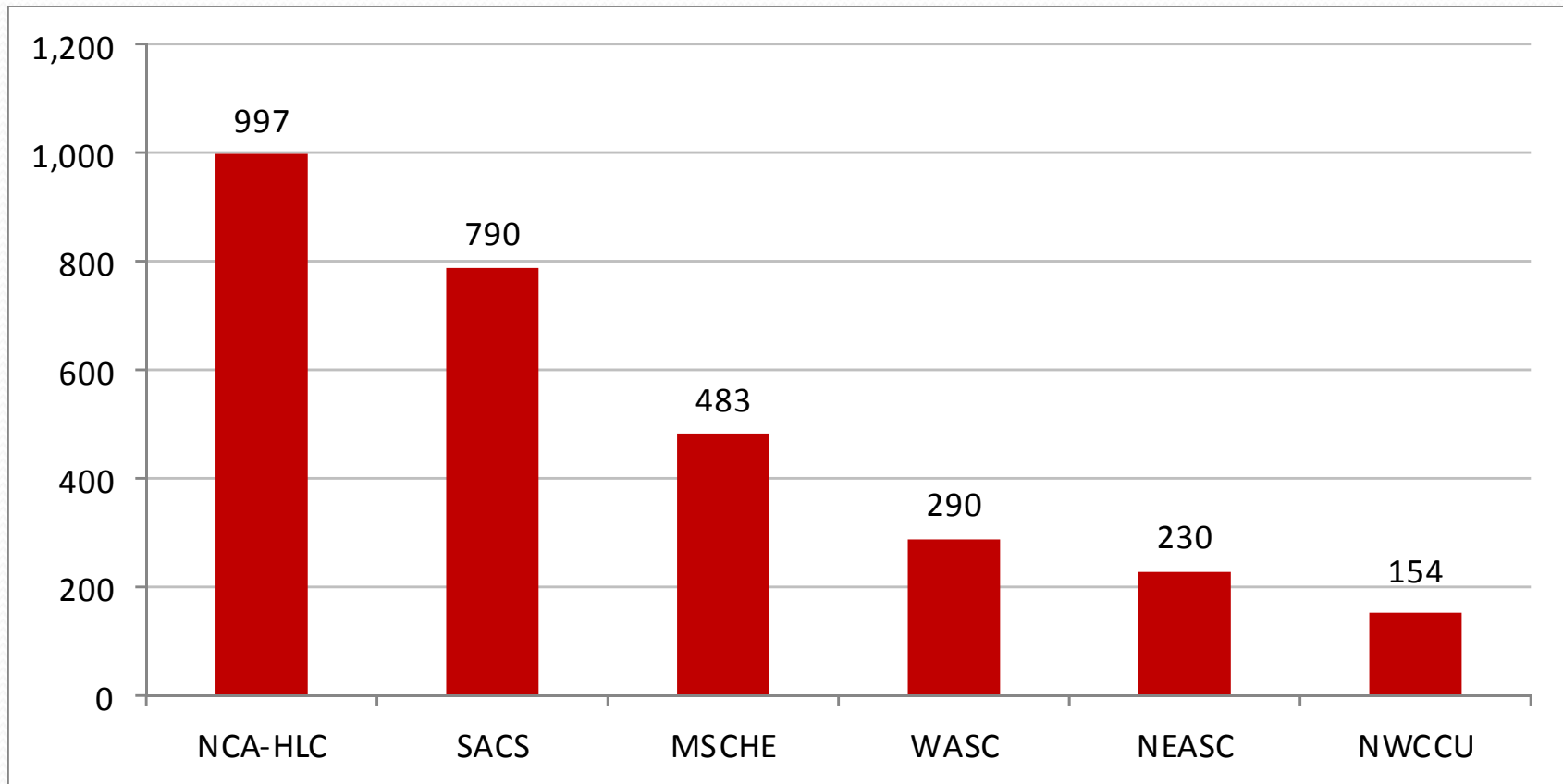# Regional Accrediting Agencies

Legend:
- MSCHE
- NEASC-CIHE
- NCA-HLC
- NWCCU
- SACS
- WASC
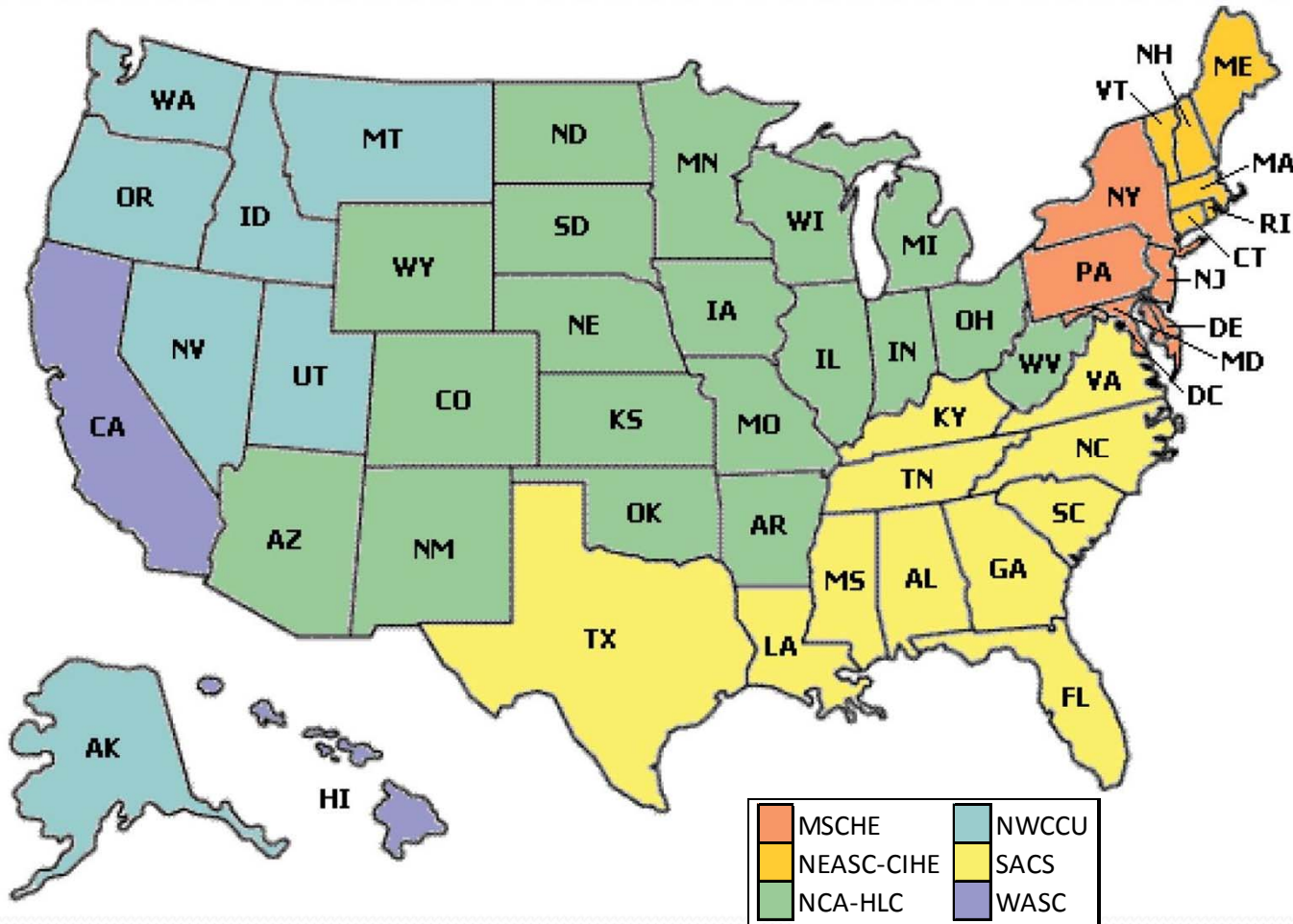
Source: U. of Central Arkansas

Number of Institutions by Regional Accreditor

Source: VSU SRA analysis of CHEA membership, April 2011.

Student Enrollment by Regional Accreditor
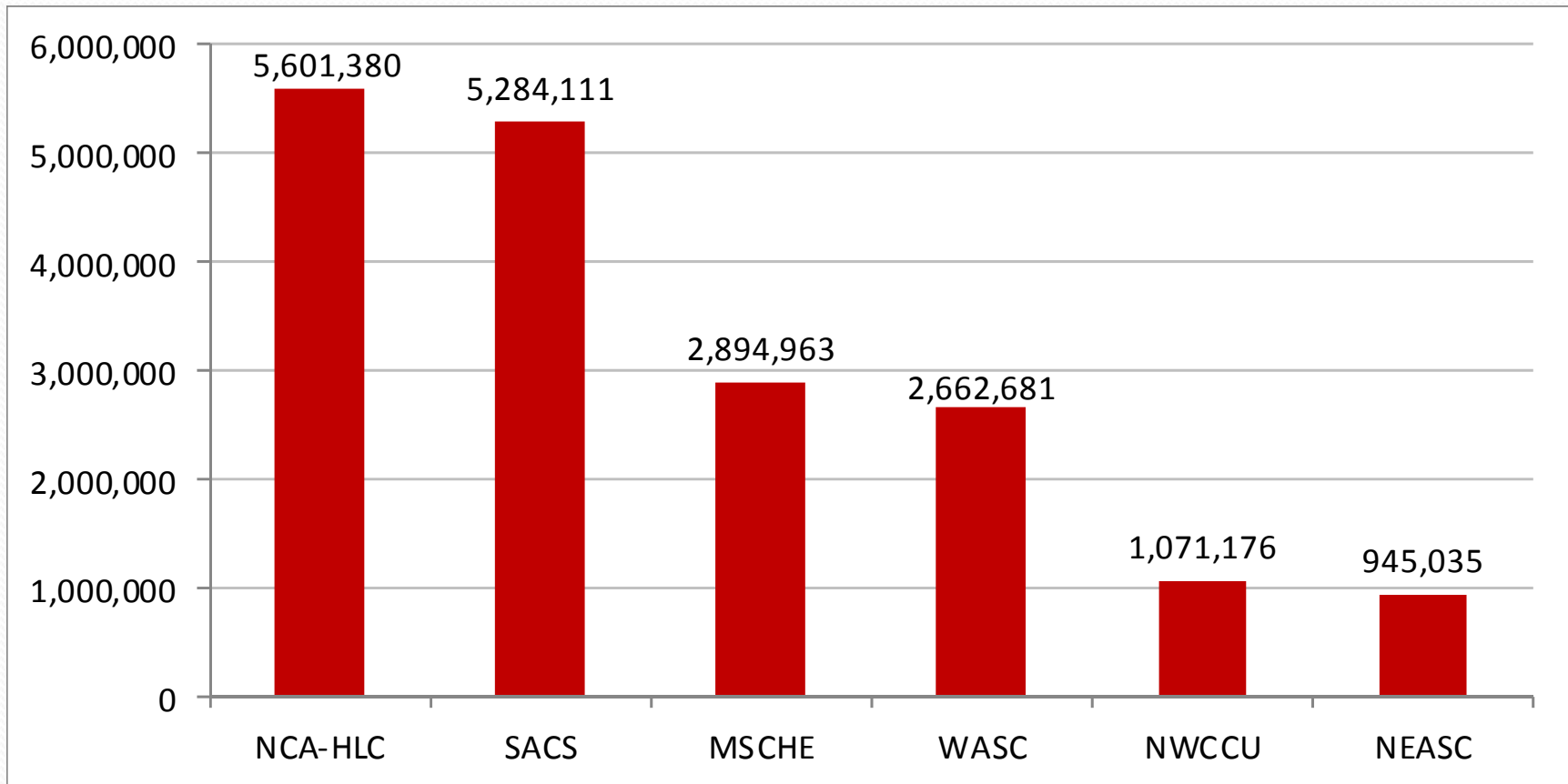
Source: VSU SRA analysis of CHEA membership and IPEDS data, April 2011.

Commonalities of Regional Accreditors

- Common processes:
  - Self-study
  - Peer review
  - Site visit
  - Judgment by accrediting organization

- Common topics evaluated:
  - Administration
  - Resources
  - Institutional Effectiveness
  - Faculty
  - Planning
  - Institutional Conduct
  - Federal Criteria

Partial Topic Crosswalk Between Six Regional Accreditors

Topic	Accreditation Standard	MSCHE	NEASC-CIHE	NCA-HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC*
Administration	Administration, Governance, and Leadership	4, 5, 6	3.1-3.12, 11.1	1d, 4a	2.A.1, 6.A.1-4, 6.B.1-9, 6.C.1-9, 6.2, 7.D.1-3, 9.A.4	2.1-3, 2.6, 3.2.1-8, 3.2.10, 3.2.11, 3.2.12, 3.10.4	1.3, 3.8-3.11, 4.6
	Student Admissions/ Retention/ Graduation	6, 8, 11, 13	4.3, 4.11, 4.23, 4.35, 4.41, 5.15, 5.17, 6.1-6.6		2.A.16, 2.F.1-6, 2.G.7, 2.G.10, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 3.C.1-4, 3.D.1-5, 3.E.3	2.6, 2.7.4, 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.6-9, 3.5.2, 3.5.3, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 3.9.2, 4.1, 4.3	2.2, 2.14
	Student Support Services	6, 8, 9, 11, 13	6.4, 6.7-6.18	3d, 4d	2.C.5, 2.D, 3.A.1-4, 3.B.2, 3.B.4-6, 3.D.9-19, 6.E	2.10, 3.4.9, 3.4.12, 3.8.2, 3.9.1, 3.9.3, 3.11.2, 4.1, 4.5	2.11-2.13
	Curriculum	6, 11, 12, 13, 14	2.5, 4.1-4.43, 5.11	4a-d	2.A.1-12, 2.C.1-8, 2.D.1-3, 2.F, 2.G.1-12, 2.H.1-3, 2.1, 2.4	2.7.1, 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 2.7.4, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.10, 3.4.11, 3.4.12, 3.5.1, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.8.2, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4	2.1-2.9, 4.7
Resources	Resource Allocation/ Institutional Resources	2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 13	3.7, 4.3, 4.9, 4.21, 5.3, 5.6, 6.14, 7.1-7.12, 8.1-8.6, 9.1-9.14	2a, 2b, 3d, 4a	1.B.4, 2.A.1, 2.A.30, 2.E.1-6, 2.G.2, 2.G.3, 2.G.6, 3.A.4, 3.D.7, 3.D.8, 3.E.4, 4.A.4, 4.B.4, 5.A, 5.B.1-5, 5.C, 5.D.1-6, 5.E.1-3, 7.A.1-4, 7.B.1-8, 7.D.1-3, 8.A.1-7, 8.B.1-3, 8.C.1-4	2.9, 2.11.1, 2.11.2, 3.2.11-14, 3.8.1, 3.8.3, 3.9.3, 3.10.1, 3.10.2, 3.10.3, 3.10.4, 3.10.5, 3.11.1, 3.11.2, 3.11.3, 4.7	3.1, 3.5-3.7

*WASC Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities only.

Standards Relating to Faculty

Standards Relating to Faculty

- Faculty Credentials
- Search & Screening
- Evaluation
- Academic Freedom
- Professional Development
- Methods of Instruction
- Function

Standards Relating to Faculty by Regional Accreditor

- Search & Screening
- Faculty Credentials
- Evaluation

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔		✔	✔	✔

Faculty Search & Screening Standards by Regional Accreditor

- Defines and publishes policies regarding faculty employment
  - Faculty handbook
  - Employment handbook – HR
  - Governing Board manual

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔		✔	✔	

Standards for Qualified Faculty by Regional Accreditor

- Institution employs sufficient, professionally qualified and diversified faculty members

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔		✔	✔	✔

Standards for Full-time Faculty by Regional Accreditor

- Adequate core of FT faculty
  - Off-Campus programs
  - Graduate/Doctoral programs
  - By Discipline

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
	✔		✔	✔	✔
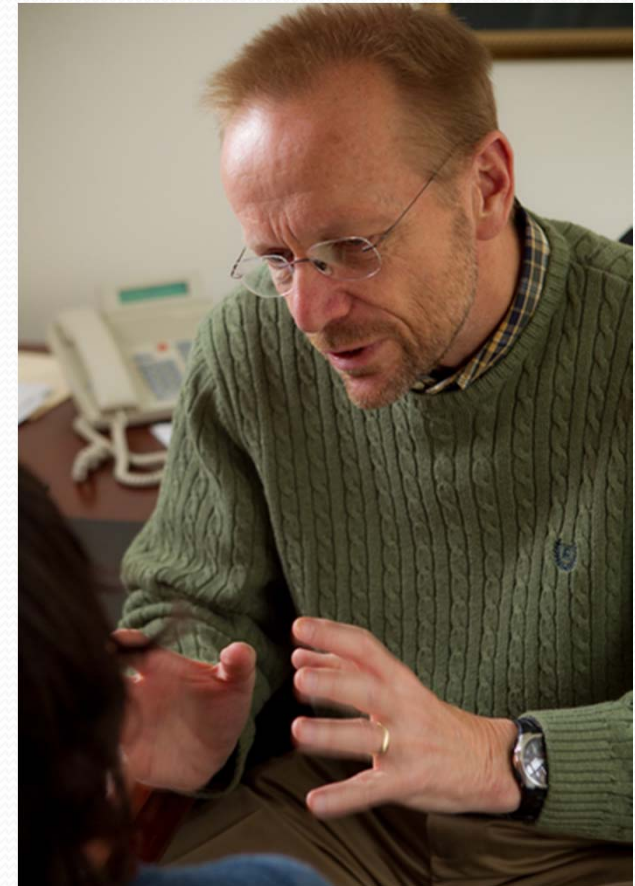
Standards for Other Faculty by Regional Accreditor

- Part-time faculty
- Adjunct instructors
- Graduate Assistants

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔		✔		

Faculty Credentials Workflow

(1) Academic Department

- Define qualification requirements
- Digital Measures software

(2) Academic Affairs

- Official repository of Faculty records
- Vet qualifications
- Faculty data into Banner system

(3) Human Resources

- Faculty personnel data (ADP system)

(4) Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment

- Extract data for use in accreditation process

Defining Faculty Credentials

- Example for minimum degree requirements

Program	Minimum Degree Requirements LOWER LEVEL COURSES	Minimum Degree Requirements UPPER LEVEL COURSES	Minimum Degree Requirements GRADUATE LEVEL COURSES
Marine Science	Graduate degree in Ecology Graduate degree in Coastal Environmental Management Graduate degree in Oceanography Masters degree in Marine sciences Masters degree in Environmental sciences Masters degree in Biological sciences Masters degree in Chemical sciences Masters degree in Physical sciences	Graduate degree in Ecology Graduate degree in Coastal Environmental Management Graduate degree in Oceanography Masters degree in Marine sciences Masters degree in Environmental sciences Masters degree in Biological sciences Masters degree in Chemical sciences Masters degree in Physical sciences	Doctoral degree in Ecology Doctoral degree in Coastal Environmental Management Doctoral degree in Oceanography Doctoral degree in Marine sciences Doctoral degree in Environmental sciences Doctoral degree in Biological sciences Doctoral degree in Chemical sciences Doctoral degree in Physical sciences
Social Work	Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from a CSWE- accredited school of social work	Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from a CSWE- accredited program and at least two years post-baccalaureate or post-master's social work degree practice experience	Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from a CSWE- accredited program and at least two years post-baccalaureate or post-master's social work degree practice experience

Correlation and Evidence

- Correlation between requirements and credentials

Name	Status	Department	Position	Discipline(s)	Lvl of Degree	Degree Earned	University	Other Qualifications & Comments
John Doe	Full	Natural Sciences	Instructor	Chemistry	Ph.D	Inorganic Chemistry	Sample Univ.	Exec. Director of Chemistry, AstraZeneca, 1992-1996

- Evidence of Credentials
  - Software: Digital Measures
  - All physical evidence housed on campus – REQUIRED!

Standards for Evaluation by Regional Accreditor

- Examples include:
  - Student Evaluation of Instruction
  - Department Head/ Chairperson's Evaluation of Faculty
  - Promotion/Tenure Review

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔		✔	✔	✔

Standards Relating to Student Admissions, Transfer Students, Retention and Graduation

Student Admissions – Common Items

- **Admissions Policies "Support" Institution's Mission**

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔		✔	✔	

- **Admissions Policies "Published"**

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔		✔	✔	

- **Services Provided for "Marginally Admitted" Students**

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔			✔	

Student Admissions – Unique Items

- Recruitment of Qualified Applicants

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
			✔		

- Admission to Graduate School "Normally" Requires Baccalaureate Degree

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
					✔

- Admission to Graduate School Requires "Demonstrably Qualified for Advanced Academic Study"

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
	✔				

Institutional Example

- SACS – Comprehensive Standard 3.4.3

The Institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission.

Wake Forest's Partial Response to 3.4.3

- *Wake Forest University publishes its admissions policies in the University Bulletin and on the Wake Forest University internet site.* Information on the admissions policies is also included in the Admissions Bulletin and the application on the admissions web site. Consistent with the University's Mission, the policy as stated in the bulletin includes, "*The applicant's secondary school program must establish a commitment to the kind of broad liberal education reflected in the academic requirements of the College.*"

Transfer Students – Common Items

- Transfer of Credit Policies Published

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔		✔	✔	

- Transfers Accepted from "Qualified" Institutions

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
	✔		✔	✔	

Transfer Students – Unique Items

- Transfer Policies and Practices Create Environment Supportive of Mobility of Learners
  - NCA-HLC
- Ensure Transfer Students are Not Disadvantaged by Transfer Requirements
  - WASC

Institutional Example

- SACS Comprehensive Standard – 3.4.4

*The Institution has a **defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experimental learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission** and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript.*

Wake Forest's Partial Response to 3.4.4

- *Transfer students are required to provide Wake Forest with a description...for the course....**If the course has a Wake Forest equivalent, the chair will give it a Wake Forest equivalent course number. ...If the course does not adhere to the academic standards of Wake Forest, then it is denied.** The chair can award up to the amount of credit the course was worth at the transferring university...The chair can also limit credit for a course. A grade of "C" or better... is required for the course to be eligible for transfer. A student cannot transfer in more than one half of the hours required for graduation.*

Retention & Graduation – Common Items

- Assessment of "Outcomes" Includes Retention & Graduation Successes

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔		✔	✔	✔

- Admissions Standards Linked to Retention Potential

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔				

Retention & Graduation – Unique Items

- Rates of retention and graduation are determined for any group the institution specifically recruits. Those rates are used in evaluating success of specialized recruitment and services/opportunities provided for the recruited students.

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
	✔				

Institutional Example

- SACS – Federal Requirement 4.1

When evaluating success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission, the institution includes, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates.

Wake Forest's Partial Response to 4.1

- **The College monitors over time graduation rates, freshman retention rates, graduate and professional school placement rates and job placement rates** as indicated in the Fact Book. Of the freshmen enrolling in fall 1999, 88.0% graduated while 95.5% of the freshmen enrolling in fall 2003 returned for the sophomore year in fall 2004. Of the class graduating in spring 2004, 28% went to graduate/professional schools while 58% obtained employment. State licensing outcomes pertain to the Department of Education, which monitors those carefully.

Institutional Assessment

Institutional Assessment

- All six regional agencies have multiple requirements for institutional assessment (ranging from 4 to 12 required standards).

- Institutional assessment is more than assessing student learning.

    - It includes assessing all institutional resources, learning outcomes, programs, faculty, students, goals, mission, etc.

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Similarities Among Agencies

- Accreditors state that all institutional programs, units, departments, and services can and should be assessed and monitored on a regular basis.

- Ensure outcomes and goals are clearly stated to make assessment possible.

- Provide a documented, organized, and sustained assessment process for all programs and services to provide reliable evidence.

Similarities Among Agencies

- Multiple stakeholders are extensively involved.
- Evidence that results are shared with constituents and prospective students is required.
- Results must be incorporated to inform continuous improvement.

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Unique Items

- Every standard has an institutional effectiveness component.

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
	✔				

- Assessment of policies and procedures to ensure the use of qualified professionals to support the institution's programs.

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
✔				✔	

  - Evaluation of the effectiveness of administrators and faculty on a periodic basis.

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
	✔			✔	

Unique Statements or Phrases

- Organization practices periodic environmental scanning to learn from its constituencies and their communities.

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
		✔			

- Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides. Community leaders testify to the usefulness of the organization's programs.

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
		✔			

38

Unique Statements or Phrases

- Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used to assess effectiveness.

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
	✔			✔	✔

- Institution employs a deliberate set of quality assurance processes at each level of institutional functioning, periodic review, ongoing evaluation and data collection.

MSCHE	NEASC CIHE	NCA HLC	NWCCU	SACS	WASC
	✔		✔		✔

Preparation Timeline and Checklists

Accreditation Reaffirmation Timeline (Sample)

Task/Event	2011												2012												2013												2014					
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING																																										
Select Reaffirmation Team											■	■																														
Accreditation Consultant (identify, secure, and bring to campus)												■	■																													
Attend Accreditation Leadership Meeting (Atlanta)													■																													
Schedule visit from Accreditation VP to meet with Compliance Certification Committee (call in April for a meeting in November)																■							■																			
COMPLIANCE REPORT																																										
Conduct Pre-Audit - Campus receives Accreditation standard assignments & begin collecting documents													■	■	■																											
Create Accreditation reaffirmation website													■	■	■	■	■																									

41

Tips and Checklists for a Successful On-Site Visit

- Attention to detail and ability to make quick changes
- Individuals at current location, to check next location, and previous location (runners)
- Name tags for all involved and two transportation vans
- Some portions may involve Trustees, President, VPs, Students, and Faculty
- Continual "elegant" food and drinks throughout visit

On-site Preparation Checklist	
Secure funding source for expenses (verify account numbers and acceptable purchases)	Coordinate with Campus Printing Services
Prepare purchase order for reaffirmation	Prepare welcome folders, name tags, meeting room signage, airport welcome sign, name tents, etc.
Conduct visit of area hotels and meeting rooms	Prepare VSU leadership team and committee roster pictures and biography for folder
Reserve block of hotel rooms and meeting room	Arrange with off-campus hotel for catering
Arrange Chair's preliminary visit	Deliver welcome folders, reaffirmation materials, office supplies, and technology to hotel and on-campus meeting room
Send information outline to staff representative	Prepare welcome baskets for hotel rooms
Reserve multiple on-campus meeting rooms (i.e., welcome session, workroom, breakout rooms, private workrooms)	Make dinner reservations for evening meals
Contact campus IT dept. with technology requests (i.e., computer, printer, internet access, dedicated IT support)	Arrange with university catering for refreshments and meals
Arrange on-site transportation (shuttle)	Prepare Campus Overview and Welcome presentation
Prepare agenda and provide copies to all parties who may be involved (i.e., chair, transportation, catering, administrators, hotel)	Someone to follow-up/confirm all of the above
Arrange informational session/social for students and faculty involved in reaffirmation	

Workroom Materials Checklist	
Agenda	Staples
Institutional Summary Form	Paper clips
Signed Compliance Certification form	Binder clips
Original compliance report	Scissors
Focused report	Tape dispenser
Financial report	Shredder (cross-cut)
Assessment reports	Printer
Flash drives with portal documentation	New flash drives
Catalogs	File folders
Faculty/Staff Directory	Accordion folders
Campus map	Calendar
Pens (blue, black, red)	Laptops
Pencils (mechanical)	Mouse pads
Highlighters (yellow)	Surge protectors
Sharpie markers	Scanner
Notepads (letter size)	Phone
Post-it notes	Printer paper
Stapler	Toner cartridge
Staple remover	

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Words of wisdom.
- Contact us, and we will be glad to provide feedback from our experiences.

Thank You

Questions and Comments

This PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded at
http://www.valdosta.edu/sra/presentations.shtml

New Ideas for Successful Accreditation:

A Comparison of Standards From Regional Accrediting Bodies

Kristina M. Cragg, Ph.D.
Asst. to the President for Strategic Research & Analysis
Strategic Research and Analysis
Valdosta State University
kmcragg@valdosta.edu

Michael M. Black, Ed.D.
Data Information Analyst
Strategic Research and Analysis
Valdosta State University
mmblack@valdosta.edu

Ross A. Griffith, M.Ed.
Director of Institutional Research and Academic Administration
Wake Forest University
griffith@wfu.edu

Nijah E. Bryant
Research Data Analyst Coordinator
Institutional Research and Planning
Savannah State University
bryantn@savannahstate.edu

Presentations and handouts are available at:
http://www.valdosta.edu/sra/presentations.shtml

Association for Institutional Research 2011 Annual Forum
Toronto, Ontario, Canada – May 23, 2011