Accreditation and Governing Boards: Roles and Responsibilities

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Topics for Today

Accreditation Overview

- Purposes and Context
- ACCJC and Our Processes
- Accreditation Standards

Roles and Responsibilities of Governing Boards

- Expectations outlined in Accreditation Standards
- Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) & Peer Evaluation

Questions & Dialogue

Accreditation 101

Accreditation is a **practice** of academic quality control

- **Promotes** institutional excellence through application of standards
- **Advances** meaningful and effective **student learning and achievement**
- **Provides** assurance to students, general public, & others of quality of educational offerings

Regular cycles of quality control practices, including:

- **Comprehensive review** against Standards (every 7 years)
- **Annual monitoring** of select aspects of institutional performance
  (e.g., Fiscal health, headcount growth/decline, student achievement, substantive changes)

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Accreditation 101

Benefits of this practice:

- Gives **credibility to degrees and credentials** awarded to students

- Stimulates **institutional innovation and improvement**

- Enables access to **Title IV (Federal Student Aid)**

- Provides **quality assurance** to students, the public, and other institutions that your Colleges are achieving their missions

Accreditation 101

ACCJC's Mission & Values

Mission Statement

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges **supports its member institutions to advance educational quality and student learning and achievement**. This **collaboration fosters institutional excellence and continuous improvement** through innovation, self-analysis, peer review, and application of standards.
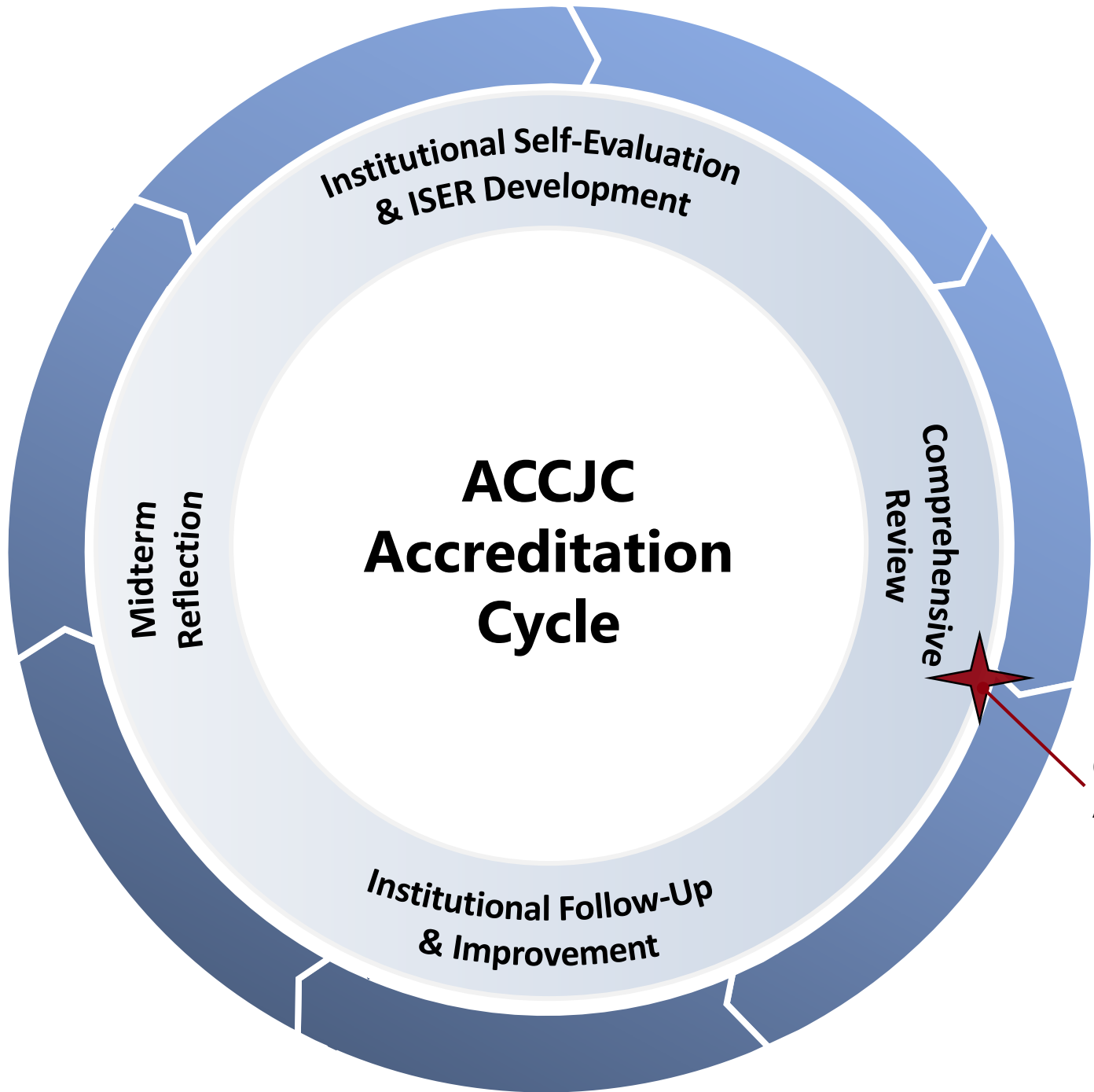
Core Values

Integrity | Quality Assurance | Institutional Improvement
Peer Review | Student Learning & Achievement | Collegiality

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ACCJC Mission & Values in Action

- VP Portfolio Model

- Improved Trainings and Support Resources
  - "Personalized" Trainings
  - Webinars & Video Trainings
  - Improved Guides & Manuals

- Streamlined Reporting Processes

- New processes for comprehensive review

- Review & Revision of Accreditation Standards

Continuous Improvement

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ACCJC Accreditation Cycle

- Institutional Self-Evaluation & ISER Development
- Comprehensive Review
- Institutional Follow-Up & Improvement
- Midterm Reflection

Commission Action on Accredited Status

Elements of the Comprehensive Review

Self-Reflection
(ISER)

Peer Review
(Team ISER Review & Visit)

Affirmation
(ACCJC Action)

Ongoing Commitment to Improvement & Educational Excellence

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Key Concepts Woven throughout Standards

- Focus on achieving institutional mission

- Integrity and honesty in institutional policies and actions

- Focus on student outcomes
  - Student achievement: Completion of meaningful educational goals
  - Student learning: Attainment of demonstrable knowledge and skills

- Metrics and evidence used to assess institutional quality

- Ongoing internal quality assurance practices

- Continuous improvement for high performance

Four Interlocking Standards

Standard I	Standard II	Standard III	Standard IV
Mission	Instructional Programs	Human Resources	Decision-Making Roles & Responsibilities
Assuring Academic Quality & Institutional Effectiveness	Library & Learning Support Services	Physical Resources	Chief Executive Officer
Institutional Integrity	Student Support Services	Technology Resources	Governing Board
		Financial Resources	Multi-College Systems or Districts
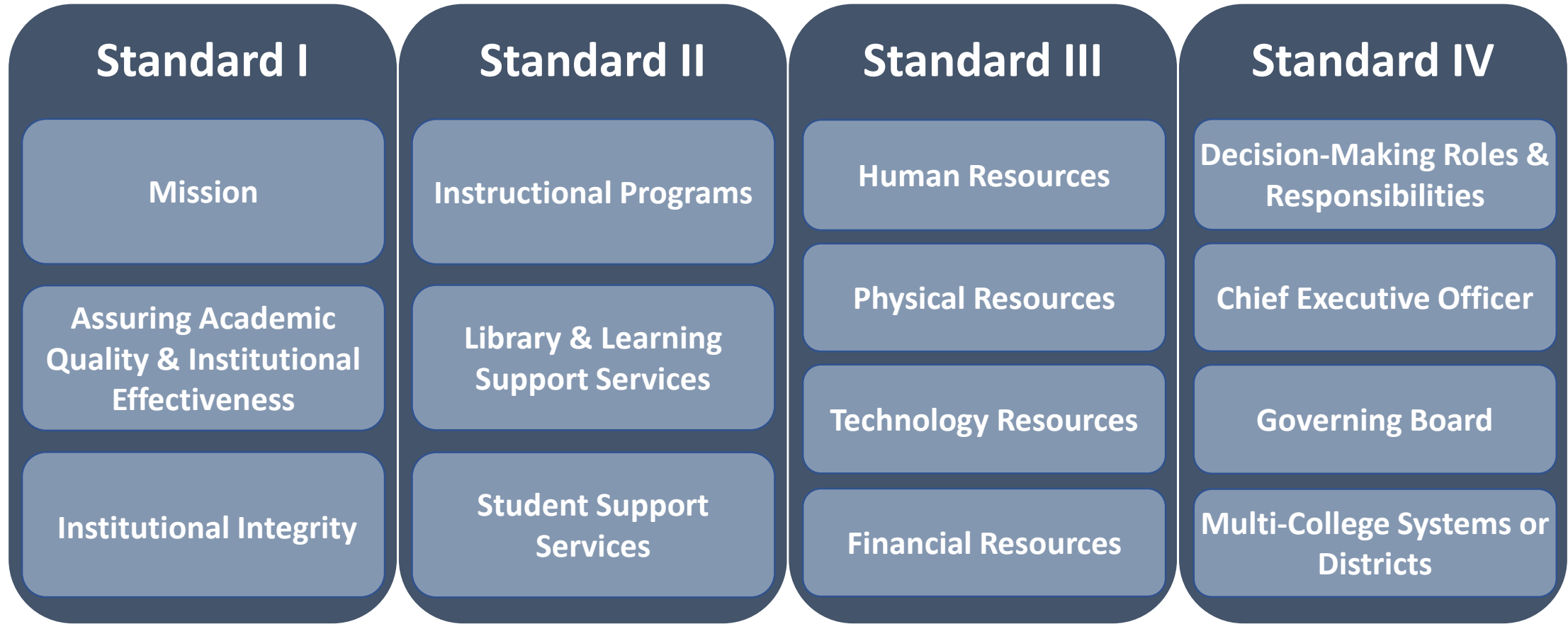
Two Challenges for Governing Boards:

1. Mission-Directed Leadership (IV.C.1, IV.C.5)
2. High Performance of the Board and the District/Colleges (IV.C.10)

Establishing expectations of excellence and measuring performance linked to the District's goals will help meet both challenges. To perform well, Trustees must be accountable as well as hold others accountable.

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What Does Board Accountability Look Like?

- Policy leadership, representing the entire District and its stakeholders
- Establishing expectations for mission and vision fulfillment
- Delegating responsibility for implementation to the CEO
- Assuring that College/District goals are achieved
- **Focus on the "what" not the "how"**

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Ensuring Educational Quality: Seven Roles for Boards

1. Develop board capacity for ensuring educational quality.

2. Ensure that policies and practices promote educational quality.

3. Ensure that learning is assessed, data are used, and improvements tracked.

4. Approve and monitor necessary financial resources.

5. Develop an understanding of academic programs.

6. Focus on the total educational experience.

7. Understand accreditation.

Association of Governing Boards, *Overseeing Educational Quality.* 2014

Accountability for Student Success

- How do you know that the mission and goals are being achieved?
  (i.e., maintaining awareness of Strategic Plan)

- How frequently do you receive data & analyses? When in the cycle?
  (i.e., meaningful evidence for decision-making)

- What types of data do you receive?
  (i.e., institutional trends, lagging/leading indicators, program review, etc.)

- How do you communicate your expectations for student success?
  (i.e., clear and consistent communication with/through the Chancellor)

Expectation for Ongoing Board Improvement

- Ask: "What can I/we do…
  - …to make our Board more effective?"
  - …to help our CEO be successful?"
  - …to help our Colleges be successful?"
- Then ask: "What can our Board do better?"

Common Accreditor Concerns Regarding Boards

Is the Board:

- Balancing the budget, planning for ongoing fiscal stability?

- Staying at the "policy level" and not intruding into daily operations?

- Acting as a collective entity, free from undue influence?

- Acting consistently with its policies, bylaws, and code of ethics?

- Delegating appropriately to the District CEO?

- Remaining engaged in strategic, integrated planning?

- Maintaining awareness and accountability for student success?

Fiduciary Responsibility: Representing the Public Trust

(B)oard members do not represent specific constituencies in the sense of taking board actions in favor of their interests. All governing board members, appointed or elected, have a fiduciary responsibility to the institution and are expected to bring to board deliberations a broad understanding of the college's role in serving all students and the institution's multiple stakeholders. There must be no implied obligation for any governing board member to serve the interests of a specific constituency over the interests of the broad mission of the college.

ACCJC *Guide to Accreditation for Governing Boards*, p. 7

Context for Board Role in ISER Review

Standard IVC13:

The governing board **is informed** about the Eligibility Requirements, the Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, accreditation processes, and the college's accredited status, and **supports through policy the college's efforts to improve and excel**. The board participates in evaluation of governing board roles and functions in the accreditation process.

Certification of the ISER, attesting:

1) effective participation by the campus community, and
2) ISER accurately reflects the nature and substance of this institution

Resources

ACCJC's Accreditation Standards:

https://accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/Accreditation-Standards_-Adopted-June-2014.pdf

ACCJC's Guide to Accreditation for Governing Boards:

https://accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-Accreditation-for-Governing-Boards-September-2020.pdf

Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT):

https://www.acct.org/governance-basics

Association of Governing Boards (AGB):

https://agb.org/knowledge-center/boardfundamentals/board-roles-responsibilities/

Lingering Questions? Clarifications?

Thank You!!