PATTERNS OF EVIDENCE

UNDERSTANDING THE NCA
SELF-STUDY AND REVIEW
PROCESSES

January 22, 2003
SETTING THE STAGE

The self-study process

- Serious and comprehensive
- Focus on the entire institution
- Institutional discovery
  - strengths, challenges and opportunities for improvement
- Convincing “pattern of evidence”
- Conclusions based on evidence valid

Introspective, reflective, analytical
THE “NEW” CRITERIA

Neither institutions nor the environments in which they exist remain static

- Focus conversations related to
  - quality, improvement, future capacity, and commitment to the common good
  - assessment, accountability, and outcomes

- Emphasis shifted from description/evaluation of resources to
  - educational and organizational effectiveness, improvement and commitment to renewal
“Revised” Criteria

- Mission and integrity
- Preparing for the future
- Student learning and effective teaching
- Acquiring, creating, applying knowledge
- Engagement and service
CRITERIA COMPONENTS

- OVERARCHING STATEMENT
  - Broad area of institutional operation reflective of the higher education community

- CORE COMPONENTS
  - Areas of institutional activity considered in judging whether the criterion is met (Parameters for evaluation)

- PATTERNS OF EVIDENCE
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Illustrative examples provided in Document B

- guidance for documenting achievement of the criterion
  - characteristic types of evidence used to build case

- core of evidence considered by the visiting team and in the reaccreditation decision
Working with PATTERNS OF EVIDENCE in the Self-Study Process

Using core components/illustrative patterns of evidence

- Frame for exploring issues and concerns
- Stimulus for discussion guiding response to each criterion
Working with PATTERNS OF EVIDENCE in Self-Study Process

Outcome (actual patterns of evidence)

- Conclusions based on thoughtful study and discussion of specific evidence
- Weighing of the evidence to determine the strongest case while acknowledging any concerns or challenges

Note: the Commission looks collectively at institutional strengths and weaknesses balancing them in a judgment of whether the criterion is met.
An institution is trying to assure that its various constituencies agree upon and understand its mission and purposes.

**Pattern of evidence**

Involvement by those constituencies in the process of deliberative bodies defining the institutional mission might be important evidence of this commitment.
Internal or external changes are significantly affecting the institution.

Pattern of evidence

Institutional revision of its publicly-stated purposes as a result of the self-study process might be evidence that it has acted responsibly toward its constituencies by acknowledging those changes and rethinking its goals.
KU mission revision (1992). The mission statement emphasizes the instruction, research and service commitments of the Lawrence and Medical Center campuses. In addition, the Lawrence campus statement speaks to international activities and to some core institutional values. The Medical Center statement speaks to the center’s role in meeting state health care needs. Introductory sections of campus publications (i.e., academic catalogs, viewbooks) provide information regarding KU and its purposes.

Descriptive rather than evaluative
Potential questions for discussion

- Within the context of today’s environment is the mission statement still relevant in defining the institution and preparing it for future challenges and directions?

- How have the statement and its core values been reflected in institutional action across the decade and shaped our future aspirations?
Process Framework for Mission/Integrity

**Today’s task**
- Develop familiarization with criterion concepts
- Identify relevant materials and resources
- Brainstorm potential patterns of evidence

**Homework – evaluate materials, identify patterns of evidence**

**Next steps**
- Generate actual patterns of evidence
- Identify gaps and/or issues
  - Identify next steps to fill gaps and/or address issues
  - Determine strengths of the evidence
Brainstorming: Using Core Components and Illustrative Patterns

- Mission is clear and appropriate for an institution of higher learning in a diverse and global society
- Mission is understood and supported across the institution (broad constituent understanding of institutional purposes and aspirations)