

## **10. Institutional Self-Evaluation Using Commission Standards**

The primary portion of a self study report reviews institutional performance using the accreditation standards and their themes. The following three elements should guide how the self study report is written.

### *Descriptive Summary*

This narrative should spring from institutional dialogue and should be focused on evidence the college has amassed in support of assertions about what it does to meet Commission standards. The underlying question regards what the institution has learned/knows about what it does.

### *Self Evaluation*

The institution is expected to analyze and systematically evaluate what it has learned/knows about itself in terms of the standards. The basic questions have to do with whether or not and to what degree institutional evidence demonstrates that the institution meets the standards and how the institution has reached this conclusion. This analysis should result in actionable conclusions about institutional effectiveness and capacity, informing decisions for what needs to be done to improve.

### *Planning Agenda*

As an institution describes and evaluates its programs and services with reference to each standard, it identifies areas in need of change. This activity yields a planning agenda — a vehicle for institutional improvement. As the institution assesses itself, it should forecast progress it plans to make. The planning agenda should include the following elements:

- a. Statements of the plans, activities, and processes (as opposed to tasks) the institution expects to implement as a statement of what the institution thinks it will do.
- b. Discussion of the ways the areas identified in need of improvement will be or have been incorporated into the ongoing, systematic evaluation and planning processes of the institution.
- c. Discussion of how the outcomes of these plans, activities and processes are expected to improve student learning and foster institutional improvement in general.

### *Note—*

The standards reference specific Commission policies. The self study report should address how the college is in compliance with these policies. A list of these policies will be found in Appendix D. Text of the policies can be found in the *Accreditation Reference Handbook*.

## **11. A List of the Evidence Available in the Team Room**

Evidence available to the visiting team should include primary sources and reports on which the Self Study Report is based. When evidence is cited in the Report, it should be indexed by standard for easy reference by team members. The *Guide to Evaluating Institutions* contains many suggestions regarding evidence. The visiting evaluation team will rely heavily on the evidence provided to it in the Team Room and elsewhere.