

CONDUCTING AN  
INSTITUTIONAL  
EFFECTIVENESS AUDIT:



WHAT DOES AN IE  
EVALUATOR LOOK FOR?

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**Ms. Marila D. Palmer**

- Vice President of Executive Affairs & Planning  
LeTourneau University
- Director of LETU's Leadership Team  
2006 SACS Reaffirmation

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OVERVIEW

- How to conduct an Institutional Effectiveness Audit
- What to include as documentation of compliance with SACS IE Principles 2.5 and 3.3.1
- How to organize IE documentation

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Can the IE reviewer *really* tell if we've been doing IE right?

Yes.

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Institutions early in the IE “evolutionary cycle”:

- Think course grades = program assessment.
- Mistake completed strategies ✓ for assessments.

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Institutions early in the IE “evolutionary cycle”:

- Try to cover with academic jargon or “teach” what assessment is and is not.
- Are not specific enough.
- Are too specific.

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## **Institutions early in the IE “evolutionary cycle”:**

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- **Poorly align assessments with outcomes and goals.**
- **Write too much to cover for lack of substance.**

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## **Institutions early in the IE “evolutionary cycle”:**

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**Fail to close the loop, which means:**

- 1. Modifications come from nowhere (not tied to assessment results).**
- 2. No assessment results are cited.**
- 3. Nothing done about assessment results cited.**

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## **Advanced institutions in the IE “evolutionary cycle”:**

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- **Benchmark against other institutions.**
- **Recognize that surveys are incomplete assessments of academic programs.**

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## Advanced IE institutions:

- Use an assortment of well-matched assessment types
  1. For academic units—major field tests, rubrics, exit interviews, employer surveys, internship supervisor surveys, etc.
  2. For administrative units—logs, financial records, work order summaries, surveys, focus groups, etc.

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## What does the IE reviewer want to see?

- Numbers; percentages; comparative, longitudinal data.  
*Research-based. 2.5*

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## What else? *Enough to judge compliance.*

- IE documentation for three complete cycles. *Ongoing. Systematic. 2.5*

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**What else? *What you do with the results.***

- That leaders analyze, share, discuss, and act upon the results.  
*Analysis. Integrated. 3.3.1*

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**What else helps your case?**

- Highlighted sections pointing to the proof.  
*Evidence of improvement. 3.3.1*

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**What does the IE reviewer need to begin the review?**

- Organized overviews of programs & departments matched to org charts and matched to catalogs.  
*Institution-wide. 2.5*

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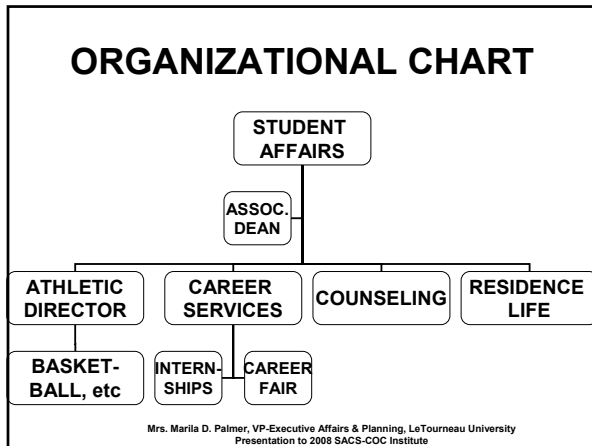
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### ■ Organized overview *Institution-wide.*

Year ↓ Program	→ Plan 04-05	Results 04-05	Plan 05-06	Results 05-06	Plan 06-07	Results 06-07
Athletics	✓	✓	✓	X*	✓	✓
Career Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Counseling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X*
Student Activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rez Life	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

\* Change in directors.

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### What are some of the problems with organization?

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- No overview indicating which units submit IE and when
- Mismatch between IE academic unit documentation & information in catalog or website
- Inconsistent names used for same program, office, or assessment

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## What do you need to prove?

Core Requirement 2.5 Excerpts

- Ongoing
- Integrated
- Institution-wide
- Research-based

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## What else must you prove?

Core Requirement 2.5 Excerpts

- Systematic
- Continuing improvement
- Accomplishing mission

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## Is there anything else?



Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 Excerpts

- Identifies outcomes for educational programs & administrative/educational support services
- Assesses whether it achieves these outcomes

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**Is there anything else?**



**Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 Excerpts**

- Provides evidence of improvement
- Based on analysis of those results

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**How can you know if you are in**  
*compliance?*

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**Institutional  
Effectiveness Audit**

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**Institutional Effectiveness Audit**

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- Look at documentation through the eyes of an off- or on-site committee member.
- Understand what they need to identify.

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## Institutional Effectiveness Audit

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- Make their jobs easier.
- Win friends & influence people!

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## How do you conduct an Institutional Effectiveness Audit?

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## *Suggestions for an Internal IE Audit*

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- Schedule time between unrelated departments.
- Take one year's plan & exchange with another department.
- Read & re-read 2.5 and 3.3.1.

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**More Suggestions for an IE Audit**



- Walk through the audit form like “grading.”
- Understand better when it is not your writing.
- Repeat with report of results for same year; then repeat for two more cycles.

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**Doesn't this take a long time?**



- Not as long as leading academic and administrative support departments to correct their IE documentation in time for the on-site visit

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**Doesn't this take a long time?**



- Not as long as rewriting the narrative of 2.5 and 3.3.1 for the focused report
- Not as long as sending all of the new documentation to the on-site team

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**Doesn't this take a long time?**

- Not as long as explaining to your president why you are not in compliance
- Not as long as submitting follow up report(s)<sup>1+</sup>

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***Just remember . . .***



- All institutions must reach 100% compliance.
- The only question is when you want to do it!

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