

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING
IN INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

by

JOHN ANDREW SCOTT COOPER

(Under the Direction of Karen L. Webber)

ABSTRACT

Postsecondary institutions in the U.S. function in a high-accountability environment where quality, efficiency, and effectiveness are common policy and compliance themes. Accreditation has emerged as a vehicle through which the federal government, states, and accrediting agencies can hold institutions accountable. It is also a primary driver of various change initiatives including institutional effectiveness (IE), a measure of how well an institution achieves its mission and goals. Recent attention has been directed at this initiative, and data show that a high proportion of institutions fail to demonstrate compliance in this standard during accreditation reviews. This study explores if and how institutions build organizational capacity for their IE initiatives, what structures and activities are involved, and if these initiatives are sustainable. Research was conducted using qualitative fieldwork at three public research universities that demonstrated compliance in IE following a period of organizational capacity building. The study was informed by conceptual frameworks proposed by NACUBO (2005) and Toma (2010) on organizational capacity building in higher education institutions. It found that institutions built capacity in IE by adding assessment staff, improving assessment processes and procedures, and adopting new technologies. Study participants also expressed concerns for sustaining current initiatives related to the purposes of assessment, employee turnover, faculty

commitment, unpredictable funding, and changes to accreditation. Implications for future research and campus leaders are emphasized.

INDEX WORDS: Higher education, Public universities, Capacity building, Sustainability, Institutional effectiveness, Accountability, Accreditation, Assessment, Qualitative

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING
IN INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

by

JOHN ANDREW SCOTT COOPER

BA, University of South Carolina, 1988

MS, Florida State University, 1992

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2016

© 2016

John Andrew Scott Cooper

All Rights Reserved

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING
IN INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

by

JOHN ANDREW SCOTT COOPER

Major Professor: Karen L. Webber
Committee: James C. Hearn
Robert K. Toutkoushian

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2016

DEDICATION

To the wonderful families in my life that supported my dreams and educational pursuits:
Ann & Buddy Adams and daughter Katherine; Cheryl & Paul Daily; Jean & Robert Miller and
the Taylor family; and Mildred & Charles Sisk.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the wonderful people in my life. That list is long, but special thanks to Richard Bahurinsky, Penelope Brunner, Annie Hunt Burriss, Matthew T. Daily, Joseph Griffin, Anthony Jones, Janice Kleck, Janice and Mike O'Neal, and Bettie Williams. You inspired and encouraged me throughout this journey.

Thanks to the staff at the Institute of Higher Education at The University of Georgia who made Meigs Hall my home away from home. I would like to offer special thanks to my dissertation committee that included Dr. Karen Webber (chair), Dr. James Hearn, and Dr. Robert Toutkoushian. I could not have completed this undertaking without your guidance, expertise, support, and patience. I would like to offer special recognition to Dr. Webber, who kept me engaged, energized, and on-task. Thanks also to Dr. Doug Toma. You made us think and laugh, and we miss you.

Thanks to The University of Georgia, Augusta University, and Clemson University for providing the resources and time that allowed me to pursue my academic goals.

Thanks to the study institutions that allowed me to visit them to discover great ideas.

Thanks to Bettie Williams for her editorial guidance, and to Rebecca Hendren for her transcription support.

Thanks to the staff and faculty at Thornwell for giving me a strong foundation for life.

Thanks to Dr. Ann Stidham at Presbyterian College for encouraging me to dream.

Thanks to Rita, Sylvia, Dixie, Beverly, and James and their families. You were always in my thoughts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions	10
Significance of the Study	12
2 LITERATURE AND THEORY	14
Accountability	14
Management and Strategy	24
Conceptual Framework	28
3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD	33
Design	33
Case Selection	34
The Case Study Institutions	36
Data Collection Procedures	37

Reliability and Validity.....	38
Sample Selection.....	39
Data Collection Methods.....	45
Data Analysis Procedures.....	46
4 FINDINGS	48
Cases.....	48
Cross-Case Analysis.....	73
Summary of Findings.....	83
5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS.....	87
Key Findings.....	88
Research Implications.....	90
Implications for Practitioners.....	94
Conclusion.....	99
REFERENCES.....	101
APPENDICES	
A 2010 SACSCOC ACCREDITATION DATA.....	111
B 2019 SACSCOC ACCREDITATION DATA.....	112
C RECRUITMENT MATERIALS.....	113
D INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	115
E RESEARCH QUESTIONS, CONCEPTUAL FRAME, DATA, AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	118
F INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	121

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Principles in SACSCOC Reaffirmation Reviews:	
2015 Reaffirmation Class.....	5
Table 2: Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Principles in SACSCOC Reaffirmation Reviews:	
2014 Reaffirmation Class.....	6
Table 3: Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Principles in SACSCOC Reaffirmation Reviews:	
2013 Reaffirmation Class.....	7
Table 4: 2009-2010 Negative Findings Table, Small College Initiative (SACSCOC).....	8
Table 5: Accreditation Review Cycles and Reviewer Recommendations,	
by Institution.....	35
Table 6: Institutional Roles and Assessment Perspectives of Study Participants.....	37
Table 7: Tenure of Study Participants.....	43
Table 8: Summary of Selected Institutional Characteristics, by Institution.....	44
Table 9: Contributing Factors to Non-compliance in Institutional Effectiveness	
Reported by Study Participants.....	45
Table 10: Structures and Activities in Institutional Effectiveness Prior to	
Organizational Capacity Building.....	74
Table 11: Structures and Activities in Institutional Effectiveness Following	
Organizational Capacity Building.....	75

Table 12: Essential Organizational Capacity Building Elements in Institutional Effectiveness Reported by Study Participants.....	75
Table 13: Perceived Threats to Sustaining Institutional Effectiveness Initiatives Reported by Study Participants.....	82

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: NACUBO's Building Organizational Capacity Model (2005).....	29
Figure 2: Toma's Revised Building Organizational Capacity Model (2010).....	30
Figure 3: Distribution of SACSCOC-accredited Institutions, by Level and Track.....	41

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the past 65 years, postsecondary institutions in the United States (U.S.) have faced increasing accountability and transparency demands due to a confluence of social, political and economic challenges (Altbach et al., 2005). Accountability in an earlier time played a lesser role when higher education was considered a public good that bestowed both individual and societal benefits. Education was a national priority, resources were predictable, and federal and state involvement with the sector was practically non-existent. We are in a new era where higher education is perceived as a private good that delivers mostly individualized benefits and status (Marginson, 2017). It is also a time of diminishing resources to higher education (Strober, 2006). Postsecondary institutions now face unprecedented accountability and scrutiny from a growing list of accountability stakeholders and standards, and more frequent reporting cycles; some even portray it as hyperaccountability (Knapp, 2009b). The new accountability focus is on institutional performance¹ and outcomes rather than on structural features, resources, and other input criteria (Rogers, 1986). Higher education is a mature industry (Thelin, 2004), one that receives large federal support, so questions about cost, efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness should be expected (Levine, 1997). In this environment, institutions are forced to regularly reconsider their missions and priorities (Knapp, 2009b). They must also learn to manage continuous change driven by various accountability actors.²

¹ Performance can be defined and measured in various ways. For example, student performance may be measured using student learning outcomes or graduation rates.

² For additional accountability context and themes, see Heller (2001) and Finifter, Baldwin, and Thelin (1991).

Probably the most notable feature of the current accountability era is that accreditation has emerged as a primary driver of many change initiatives in higher education. Assuring and improving quality in postsecondary institutions are core values of accreditation (Eaton, 2016), but the role and function of accreditation have changed over time (Gillen, Bennett, & Vedder, 2010). Federal involvement in the accreditation process since the mid-twentieth century related to institutional eligibility for federal monies transformed that role to a gatekeeping role on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education (Provezis, 2010).³ Ewell (2014) has noted that, “Although indirect, accreditation is another vehicle through which the federal government can hold institutions accountable, so the HEA [Higher Education Act] already has many prescriptions about what accrediting organizations should do” (p. 9).

Institutional Effectiveness (hereafter, IE)⁴ is one accountability form that emerged as a response to concerns about institutional quality. Following the assessment movement of the mid-1980s (Banta, 1986)⁵, IE became a regional accreditation criterion and was later expanded following national discussions about access, affordability, quality, and accountability in higher education (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). Early in the assessment movement, accrediting agencies incorporated guidelines for assessment and improvement into the accreditation review process (Nichols, 1989).⁶ The Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC)⁷, for example, incorporated guidelines in 1985 even

³ It has also been reported that states influence institutional initiatives (McLendon and Hearn, 2003).

⁴ Terminology and compliance criteria for Institutional Effectiveness differ across regional accreditors.

⁵ Many refer to performance funding at University of Tennessee to mark the beginning of outcomes assessment movement in the U.S. (Banta, 1986)

⁶ Institutional Effectiveness can be used informally to refer to the effectiveness of an institution or formally as an accreditation term. Organizational (or institutional) effectiveness can be defined and/or measured differently by stakeholders and in different sectors.

⁷ Schloss and Cragg (2013) offer additional information on regional accreditors and their member institutions.

before the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) provided its guidance on this issue the following year (Nichols, 1989). SACSCOC guidelines required institutions “to evaluate effectiveness and to use the results in a broad-based, continuous planning and evaluation process” both during the self-study process and the ongoing operation of the institution (SACSCOC, 1987).⁸ The current description for IE is “the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring institutional performance against mission in all aspects of an institution” (SACSCOC, 2012, p. 13). SACSCOC has provided technical support and guidance to member institutions to support the implementation of IE on their campuses. These services were delivered through a variety of presentations and workshops at annual meetings, association publications, and evaluator feedback during the reaccreditation process.

Statement of the Problem

Since the adoption of IE as an accreditation theme in the early 1990s, institutions have made tremendous progress in cultivating a culture of assessment of institutional effectiveness within their institutions (Provezis, 2009). This research found that assessment was occurring at both the institutional and program levels; that assessment drivers varied (external accreditation requirement versus institutional focus on educational quality); that assessment approaches and uses differed by institutional selectivity; that human resources to support institutional activities were meager; and gaining faculty involvement and support remained a major challenge (Provezis, 2009). Other survey results presented eight “assessment intensive” states at the time that included Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Institutions in these states were more likely to use standardized

⁸ For SACSCOC, the initial form of IE was called Section III and is now referred to Core Requirement 2.5. IE was guided by two *must* statements which constituted requirements for accreditation, and eight *should* statements which were advisory suggestions not intended to be prescriptive (SACSCOC, 1987).

testing, valid samples representing the institution's population, deploy employer surveys, and to have a common set of student learning outcomes (Ewell, Jankowski, & Provezis, 2010).⁹ Other researchers reported that institutional leaders had also created various reporting units and hired professional staff who are knowledgeable in related accreditation requirements (Volkwein, 2011).

In the early 2000s, the IE expanded to include assessment of academic programs and administrative units. In the SACSCOC accreditation region, Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1: Institutional Effectiveness was added as a new accreditation requirement. However, recent accreditation data show that many institutions fail to demonstrate compliance in this standard (SACSCOC, 2015, 2014, 2013). Tables 1-3 show that a high proportion of SACCCOC member institutions were cited for non-compliance in IE during recent accreditation review cycles.¹⁰ Data from 2010 and 2009 also suggest that this phenomenon is not new (see Appendices A-B). Provezis (2009) found similar increases in IE non-compliance at institutions in other accreditation regions.¹¹ Data in these tables are aggregated, and are organized by various accreditation standards and phases of accreditation review.¹² They do not include identifying information on institutions, institution type (based on highest degree awarded), or specific deficiencies that were observed during accreditation reviews.

⁹ 2010 NILOA study results were summarized in a 9/27/10 press release by Staci Provezis. Retrieved from http://learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/NILOA2010statestudyPR_000.pdf. A full reference to the study is presented in this document's appendix under Ewell, Jankowski, and Provezis (2010).

¹⁰ *Cited* and *negative findings* are used interchangeably in this study and in SACSCOC accreditation documents and reports. These terms refer to a judgement of non-compliance in an accreditation standard. Institutions found to be non-compliant may receive a *recommendation* from SACSCOC to correct the non-compliant standard. More severe responses or actions can be taken against an institution in certain cases.

¹¹ Terminology on IE and related standards vary across regional accreditation associations. One regional accreditor did not respond to the 2009 NILOA survey.

¹² Some tables do not include sample or population information.

Table 1

*Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Principles in SACSCOC Reaffirmation Reviews: 2015**Reaffirmation Class Institutions (N=81)*

Rank	Requirement / Standard	% Institutions In Non-Compliance
Off-site Review		
1	3.7.1 (Faculty Competence)	90
2	3.3.1.1 (IE-Educational Programs)	60
3	3.3.1.2 (IE-Administrative Units)	49
4	3.7.2 (Faculty Evaluation)	48
5	3.3.1.3 (IE-Educational Support)	47
6	2.8 (Faculty) ¹³	46
7	3.3.1.5 (IE-Community/Public Service)	42
8	2.11.1 (Financial Resources)	40
9	3.2.9 (Personnel Appointment)	38
10	3.2.14 (Intellectual Property Rights)	38
On-site Review		
1	3.3.2 (Quality Enhancement Plan)	59
2	3.3.1.1 (IE-Educational Programs)	31
3	3.7.1 (Faculty Competence)	25
4	3.3.1.2 (IE-Administrative Units)	19
5	3.5.1 (General Education Competencies)	15
6	3.3.1.3 (IE-Educational Support)	14
7	3.3.1.5 (IE-Community/Public Service)	10
8	3.10.1 (Financial Stability)	9
9	3.10.3 (Control of Finances)	6
10	3.12.1 (Substantive Change)	6
C&R Review / Board of Trustees		
1	3.3.1.1 (IE-Educational Programs)	16
2	3.10.1 (Financial Stability)	7
3	3.3.1.2 (IE-Administrative Units)	6
4	3.3.1.3 (IE-Educational Support)	6
5	3.5.1 (General Education Competencies)	6
6	3.3.2 (Quality Enhancement Plan)	5
7	3.7.1 (Faculty Competence)	5
8	3.3.1.4 (IE-Research)	4
9	3.10.3 (Control of Finances)	4

Source: SACSCOC, March 2016

¹³ Faculty: SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*. 2012

Table 2

*Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Principles in SACSCOC Reaffirmation Reviews: 2014**Reaffirmation Class Institutions (N=83)*

Rank	Requirement / Standard	% Institutions In Non-Compliance
Off-site Review		
1	3.7.1 (Faculty Competence)	94
2	3.3.1.1 (IE-Educational Programs)	61
3	2.11.1 (Financial Resources)	48
4	3.4.11 (Academic Program Coordination)	46
5	3.3.1.5 (IE-Community/Public Service)	45
6	3.3.1.2 (IE-Administrative Units)	40
7	3.7.2 (Faculty Evaluation)	39
8	3.3.1.3 (IE-Educational Support)	37
9	2.8 (Faculty) ¹⁴	36
10	3.5.1 (General Education Competencies)	35
	4.1 (Student Achievement)	35
On-site Review		
1	3.3.2 (Quality Enhancement Plan)	47
2	3.3.1.1 (IE-Educational Programs)	31
3	3.7.1 (Faculty Competence)	28
4	3.3.1.2 (IE-Administrative Units)	14
5	3.3.1.3 (IE-Educational Support)	12
6	3.3.1.5 (IE-Community/Public Service)	12
7	3.10.1 (Financial Stability)	7
8	3.5.1 (General Education Competencies)	6
9	3.7.2 (Faculty Evaluation)	6
10	3.12.1 (Substantive Change)	6
C&R Review / Board of Trustees		
1	3.3.1.1 (IE-Educational Programs)	12
2	3.3.1.2 (IE-Administrative Units)	6
3	3.3.1.3 (IE-Educational Support)	6
4	3.10.1 (Financial Stability)	6
5	3.3.1.5 (IE-Community/Public Service)	5
6	3.7.1 (Faculty Competence)	5
7	3.3.2 (Quality Enhancement Plan)	4
8	3.5.1 (General Education Competencies)	4
9, 10		<3

Source: SACSCOC, July 2015

¹⁴ Faculty: SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*. 2012

Table 3

*Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Principles in SACSCOC Reaffirmation Reviews: 2013**Reaffirmation Class Institutions*

Rank	Requirement / Standard	% Institutions In Non-Compliance
<i>Off-site Review</i>		
1	3.7.1 (Faculty Competence)	100
2	3.3.1.1 (IE-Educational Programs)	64
3	3.4.11 (Academic Program Coordination)	59
4	2.8 (Faculty) ¹⁵	53
5	3.3.1.3 (IE-Educational Support)	53
6	3.2.1.4 (Intellectual Property Rights)	52
7	3.3.1.2 (IE-Administrative Units)	52
8	3.3.1.5 (IE-Community/Public Service)	52
9	2.11.1 (Financial Resources)	48
10	3.5.1 (General Education Competencies)	45
<i>On-site Review</i>		
1	3.3.2 (Quality Enhancement Plan)	59
2	3.3.1.1 (IE-Educational Programs)	36
3	3.3.1.3 (IE-Educational Support)	29
4	3.7.1 (Faculty Competence)	29
5	3.3.1.2 (IE-Administrative Units)	24
6	3.3.1.5 (IE-Community/Public Service)	23
7	3.5.1 (General Education Competencies)	20
8	3.3.1.4 (IE-Research)	9
9	3.10.1 (Financial Stability)	8
10	3.10.3 (Control of Finances)	8
<i>C&R Review / Board of Trustees</i>		
1	3.3.1.1 (IE-Educational Programs)	21
2	3.3.1.2 (IE-Administrative Units)	13
3	3.5.1 (General Education Competencies)	13
4	3.3.1.3 (IE-Educational Support)	12
5	3.3.1.5 (IE-Community/Public Service)	11
6	3.13.4b (Corporate Structure)	9
7	3.3.2 (Quality Enhancement Plan)	5
8	3.10.3 (Control of Finances)	5
9	3.3.1.4 (IE-Research)	4
10	3.10.1 (Financial Stability)	4

Source: SACSCOC, 2014

¹⁵ Faculty: SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*. 2012

Table 4 provides additional context on non-compliance in IE for SACSCOC institutions (Johnson, 2011). It shows that in the 2009-2010 accreditation review cycle, a higher percentage of low-enrollment institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were non-compliant when compared to other institutions. Johnson (2011) has suggested that adequate resources, strong leadership, and good planning play key roles in successful assessment initiatives. In a different study, Malone (2003) found that recommendations were evenly distributed among SACSCOC institutions.

Table 4

2009-2010 Negative Findings Table, Small College Initiative (SACSCOC)

Recent Compliance with IE Standards: Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 (Institutional Effectiveness)			
Percentage of SACSCOC Institutions with a Negative Finding 2009 and 2010 Reaffirmation Classes			
Stage of Process	Institutions with <1,500 FTEs	HBCUs	All Institutions
Number of Institutions	71	27	174
Off-site Non-compliance	89%	85%	79%
On-site Recommendation	69%	52%	51%
Commission Monitoring Report	35%	30%	30%

Source: Johnson, 2011

SACSCOC has suggested common issues associated with IE non-compliance can include the lack of defined student learning outcomes and/or methods for assessing the outcomes; poor sampling; and not addressing distance education (Baird, 2013). The phenomenon of non-compliance in Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 is disconcerting given the early introduction of assessment to higher education over thirty-five years ago, the incorporation of IE standards in SACSCOC accreditation for many decades (Kuh, Jankowski, Ikenberry, & Kinzie, 2014), and

because SACSOC was considered a pioneer in the adoption of IE standards (Nichols, 1989; Rogers & Gentemann, 1989). Accreditation associations have sought to build organizational capacity in their member institutions through a variety of activities, but many institutions fail to demonstrate compliance for their initiatives. Non-compliance can contribute to a variety of external consequences including additional monitoring, uninvited scrutiny, institutional brand damage, and loss of prestige. Also, in rare, worse-case scenarios, institutions can lose their accreditation status and no longer be eligible for federal support through student financial aid and federal research and development funding. Any negative accreditation outcome can contribute to further erosion of public confidence in higher education.

Purpose of the Study

Organizations in business, government, and nonprofit sectors have developed and employed a variety of strategies to increase transparency and the assessment of the organization's ability to achieve its goals. Stakeholders in the higher education community are increasingly looking for similar solutions, yet little is known on if or how well such organizational practices are being implemented in the sector. This study examined if and how leaders in higher education institutions are using organizational capacity building to support their campus IE initiatives. Accreditation compliance in IE was used as a lens to identify institutions that achieved compliance following a period of capacity building in their initiatives. These research themes are relevant given the importance for institutions to retain their institutional accreditation, and because recent data show that many institutions fail to demonstrate compliance in their campus initiatives even though technical support and guidance has been provided to support implementation.

This study used interviews to gather rich detail from campus leaders on capacity building activities at their institutions. It also explored if and how organizational elements interacted, and if current initiatives are sustainable. The systems literature discusses the importance of *fit*, the need for organizational elements to be consistent with institutional strategy and with each other (Galbraith & Kazanjian, 1986). This is an important concept since strategy is a driver of *purposes*, the central element in the organizational capacity building model featured in this study. How study institutions redesigned their organizations was also explored for good design and congruence. Innovation diffusion theory and institutional theory were also used to explore various adoption and maturity features of IE at institutions.

Discussion on organizational capacity building is limited in the higher education literature. The U.S Department of Education (Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) and the National Association of Colleges and University Business Officers (NACUBO, 2005) provided funding for the development of an initial organizational capacity building model (called “BOC”) for higher education institutions and for follow-up field research. Toma (2010) revised this model and developed a series of case studies on capacity building at various postsecondary institutions. None of these case studies featured capacity building in IE, but Toma encouraged future exploration of this topic.

Research Questions

Drawing on the higher education literature and the specialized literature in accreditation, this study sought to address the following themes:

- RQ #1: Does accreditation compliance in IE vary by institutional type, size and/or control? If so, how?

- RQ #2: Are leaders in higher education institutions using organizational capacity building to support their campus initiatives related to accreditation? If so, how is this being accomplished?
- RQ #3: In these initiatives, do organizational capacity building elements interact? If so, how?
- RQ #4: Are these initiatives sustainable, and if so, how is this being accomplished?

Selected postsecondary institutions that achieved compliance in IE following a period of organizational capacity building were the focus of this study. Recent accreditation data show that many institutions are cited for non-compliance IE (for example, see Tables 1-3 and Appendices A-B). These reports are surprising since assessment and IE have been part of the accountability landscape for over a quarter century, and regional accreditation associations including SACSCOC have provided leadership in this initiative as well as technical support and guidance to member institutions (Nichols, 1989).

Compliance in IE was used as a research lens to explore if and how are institutions using capacity building to plan, implement, and sustain their campus initiatives related to accreditation. Accreditation data do not clearly identify which institutions are non-complaint in their campus initiatives, and few institutions choose to disclose this status on their websites. Although Malone (2003) found that recommendations were evenly distributed among SACSCOC institutions, Johnson (2011) reported that one-third of institutions with enrollments of less than 1,500 students and a disproportionate number of HBCUs received negative findings during 2009-2010 reaffirmation cycles (see Table 4).

Significance of the Study

Officials at higher education institutions have implemented various campus initiatives that resemble those in the business sector. However, the track record of successfully implementing change initiatives in other sectors such as in business is not good, where approximately 70% of new initiatives fail (Charan & Colvin, 1999). This finding reflects similar challenges in the higher education sector which has a tradition of borrowing business practices and applying them with mixed success (Birnbaum, 2001; Chaffee, 1985). For example, recent data show that many institutions fail to demonstrate compliance in various initiatives related to accreditation, and that this phenomenon is not new (SACSCOC, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2010, 2009). Institutional leaders and professional managers tasked with planning, implementing, and sustaining new or existing campus initiatives should find results from this study instructive since insights that can be applied to various campus initiatives at their institution.

This study is informed by recent accreditation data that showed that many institutions had failed to demonstrate compliance in IE, defined as “the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring institutional performance against mission in all aspects of an institution” (SACSCOC, 2012). The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) has conducted multiple national surveys and projects on the assessment of student learning outcomes in postsecondary institutions. Their research targeted higher education chief academic officers (Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009; Kuh, Jankowski, Ikenberry & Kinzie (2014); campus leaders (Kinzie, 2010); and department or program chairs (Ewell & Kinzie, 2011). This study provides insights from various campus leaders on organizational capacity building that occurred at their institutions following a period of non-compliance for campus IE initiatives. The study’s findings are expected to expand the accreditation and higher education management literatures, and to

offer practical insights on using organizational capacity building as a framework to plan, implement, and sustain campus assessment initiatives.

This study was not intended to validate organizational capacity building as a strategic framework. However, it does inform readers of organizational capacity building activities at selected postsecondary institutions, provides illustrations of how various structures and activities interacted, and suggests how these initiatives might be sustainable. Capability building can be used as a framework, tool, or checklist when planning and implementing a new campus initiative or evaluating an existing one. Organizational fit, good design, congruence, innovation diffusion, and institutionalization are additional themes related to organizational capacity building that were explored.

Accreditation data referenced in this study are aggregated, and do not include the compliance status of individual institutions or details on reviewer recommendations to institutions related to non-compliance. Tables 1-3 and Appendices A-B include accreditation data on institutions that participated in accreditation review in a specific cycle. Readers should not generalize these reported accreditation findings to all higher education institutions in SACSCOC or to institutions outside this accreditation region. Selected institutions that built organizational capacity for their IE initiatives will be featured in this study with the hope that findings and insights will expand the literature in these critical themes.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE AND THEORY

This study explored organizational capacity building in postsecondary institutions. Toma (2010) described capacity building in higher education institutions as the necessary administrative foundation to plan, implement and sustain a campus initiative. This research theme is timely since postsecondary institutions face continuous change. Many change initiatives are driven by various accountability actors, including accreditation. However, data show that many campus initiatives fail, including those related to IE and assessment.

Accountability

Over 7,000 postsecondary institutions in the U.S. provide education opportunities to over 21 million students (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Probably the most profound period of growth in the sector occurred between post-World War II and up to the late 1970s when education became a national priority, higher education was considered a public good, and institutions enjoyed generous federal and state support. Thelin described this period as “marked by prosperity, prestige, and popularity” (2004, p. 260), and others have referred to it as the golden age for higher education (Pusey, 1978). The post-war economy was rebounding and federal aid to veterans and support to universities for research and development fueled a tremendous expansion of the sector (Keller, 1983; Thelin, 2004). The G.I. Bill provided the financial impetus for growth in this period, and enrollments increased from 3.7 million in 1960 to 12 million in 1980 (McLendon & Hearn, 2003). The 1947 President’s Commission on Higher Education (known as the Truman Commission) extolled the enduring importance of education in

supporting future social and international roles of the U.S. in world affairs, and it called for greater access and affordability for all the nation's citizens (Hutcheson, 2007).

Social justice debates and student activism in the 1960s led to the enactment of new major federal programs to promote greater opportunities for the disenfranchised. Federal devolution eventually shifted obligations of these programs from Washington to the states (Roherty, 1997). Turbulent economic times in the 1970s, coupled with the decline of state support for higher education, forced higher education to compete against other programs for increasingly limited resources. It also required postsecondary institutions to develop sustainability models, and to look to other sectors for various business and management solutions. By the end of the 1970s, it was evident that this period of growth and prosperity was coming to an end (Morrill, 2007).

In the 1970s and 1980s, a spate of national reports exclaimed that higher education was in peril. *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) portrayed an education system in crisis. According to this report, high functional illiteracy, declining performance scores, a watering-down of the curriculum, and poor academic performance relative to other countries threatened the nation's prominence in world standings. Educational outcomes data echoed these concerns by reporting on the marked decline of SAT scores from 1962-1982.¹⁶ In October, 1984, the National Institute of Education (Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education) reported that undergraduate education was also in decline. One month later, the National Endowment for the Humanities expressed concern over the lack of coherence and vitality in undergraduate education (Bennett, 1984). In February of the following year, *Integrity in the College Curriculum* urged

¹⁶ Declines in SAT scores during that period have been attributed to many causes. Hayes, Wolfer and Wolfe (1996) provide a list of proposed explanations, including changes in composition of test takers.

faculty to emphasize quality teaching and curricular coherence as undergraduate education was become more fragmented (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 1985).

Educational data from the Scholastic Aptitude Test (Educational Testing Service) appeared to validate critics' concerns as scores declined dramatically from 1962 to 1982. In 1986, the *National Assessment of Educational Progress* (National Center for Education Statistics) reported that eight percent of 17-year-old American whites and 42 percent of similarly-aged blacks were functionally illiterate.¹⁷ Business and industry leaders also reported that graduates were unable to problem-solve, communicate, engage in ethical decision-making, work in teams, and interact effectively with diverse others. Citizen groups noted the disengagement from civic life of recent graduates, citing low voter participation.

New Accountability Movement

By the mid-1980s, in response to perceived declines in educational standards and performance due to open admissions and mass education (Gaither, 1995), excellence become the new quality agenda in education. Funding by the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE), the Education Commission of the States, and The Johnson Foundation supported the development of *Principles of Good Practices in Undergraduate Education* (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). On the heels of this report, AAHE also published *Principles of Good Practices in Assessing Student Learning* (1987). The purpose of this document was to not to provide hands-on practical assessment guidance, but rather, “foundational ideas on assessment ... a tool to advance assessment as a powerful tool for educational improvement” (Hutchings, Ewell, & Banta, 2012).

¹⁷ The National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the *Nation's Report Card*, is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

Another report by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (National Center for Education Statistics, 1986) stated that eight percent of seventeen-year-old American whites and 42 percent of similarly-aged blacks were functionally illiterate. The National Governors' Association (1986, 1991) called for institutions to develop comprehensive programs to measure student learning, which was echoed by state legislatures and governing boards (Nichols, 1989). In 1987, the federal government proposed changes to the procedures and rules of regional accrediting agencies.

In the 1980s and 1990s, perspectives on neoliberalism¹⁸ and new public management¹⁹ shifted how higher education defined and justified its institutional existence (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Neoliberalism vis-à-vis higher education policy predisposed that the individual is a rational optimizer and the best judge of his/her interests and needs; that resources and opportunity can be best allocated through a free market; and that the free market can better regulate itself than can government or other outside forces.

Accountability requirements eventually moved to more standardized reporting of performance indicators that appealed to broader non-campus constituencies such as legislators, employers, and the public (Gaither, 1995).²⁰ Many performance indicator systems were developed in the 1990s by state legislators and boards seeking to improve institutional productivity, but these systems were often met with resistance from institutions. According to Gaither (1995), a limitation of performance indicators was that they were designed to examine

¹⁸ The conception of neoliberalism has changed over time. Olssen and Peters, 2005

¹⁹ New Public Management refers to policy and management reform related to government activity and service delivery. NPM moved beyond the bureaucratic model / paradigm and toward and emphasized market competition, modernization, increased efficiency, disaggregation, customer satisfaction, and entrepreneurialism.

²⁰ Sizer (1992) identifies five core uses for performance indicators: monitoring, rationalization, evaluation, resource allocation, and dialogue (In Gaither, 1995, p. 6).

institutional productivity relative to the public investment made in it. State performance-accountability policies in higher education spread (McLendon, Hearn & Deaton, 2006), and by 1994 about one-third of states had adopted or were considering a system of performance indicators (including the assessment of student learning) for use in their higher education systems (Gaither, 1995).²¹ Gaither further explained that early assessment mandates allowed institutions to develop their own programs, but that institutional comparisons were practically impossible. By the mid-1990s, state interest in student learning assessment had begun to diminish due to budget shortfalls that limited resources and because accrediting agencies had instituted their own requirements that were similar in many cases to state requirements (Zis et al., 2010).

At the federal level, accountability changes followed on the footsteps of Higher Education Reauthorizations (HEA) and commissions appointed to review the current state higher education and accountability in the U.S. and accountability. Notably, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education* (U.S. Department of Education, 2006) reiterated the urgent need for higher education to perform differently and better. It also expressed concerns about U.S. global economic competitiveness, and it refocused attention to the importance of access, affordability, and accountability. In 2006, the Spellings Commission (U.S. Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education) initiated a national call for leadership in postsecondary affairs, and emphasized increased educational attainment, higher quality in educational programs, and measurement of student learning. Critics, however, objected to the idea of a uniform system of accountability (Knapp, 2009b), and suggested that excellence in higher education comes from "autonomy, markets, competition, choice for students,

²¹ Approximately 36 states currently allocate money for higher education based, in part, on performance measures (CNBC Web article accessed on 6/26/15 at <http://www.cnbc.com/id/102774218>).

federalism and limited federal regulation" (Knapp, 2009b, p. 3). Eaton (2012) noted that the expansion of governmental authority in higher education was driven by increasing federal investment in higher education, the increasing high cost of college attendance, the expanding nationalization of public policy, and electronic technology. These developments have resulted in a shift that "has challenged the core values of both accreditation and higher education, and now threatens heretofore successful academic practices such as the judge of quality by academics and institutional self-determination" (Eaton, 2012, p. 15).

Additional public accountability features entered the landscape following the HEA reauthorization cycle in 2007 including an online standardized reporting of institutional data and measures of undergraduate student learning outcomes through the Voluntary System of Accountability ("College Portrait"). Since the last HEA reauthorization (2008), accreditation agencies have also ratcheted up their compliance and reporting expectations during institutional reaccreditation and mid-cycle reviews. These actions were designed to appropriately respond to "government assertiveness" (Eaton, 2012, p. 13) in the accreditation processes and to public demands for more accountability and transparency.

More recently, Alexander (2015) proposed new concepts and models for reforming accreditation including "reforming accreditation processes and refocus on quality; establishing new accreditation pathways; decoupling accreditation from eligibility for federal funding; redesigning accreditation to promote competition and innovation, and keeping recognition of accrediting agencies independent and free from politics (p. 16-17). Ewell (2015a and 2005b) has offered suggestions for transforming institutional accreditation (2015), but he also mostly agreed with Alexander's reform proposals, as did Brittingham (2015).

Drivers and forms

Calls for accountability are not new and will likely continue. Ewell (1994) has suggested that higher education invited accountability scrutiny by appealing to legislatures for resources that would pay a variety of dividends; thus inviting "expectations of endless data" (Ewell, 1994). Knapp (2009b) noted that in the 2008 reauthorization of the HEA, accountability measures doubled and states are increasing accountability demands even as their funding of higher continues to decline. Growing governmental influence since 1989 through recognized regional accrediting agencies likely foreshadows increasing accountability activity in the future, but these agencies are also caught in the middle between assuring institutional quality and improvement and regulatory compliance (Sibolski, 2012). The number of accreditation cycles have also increased. In the SACSCOC region, for example a Fifth-year Interim Report. Bardo (2009) has suggested accountability reporting may one day become an annual activity.

Higher education stakeholders demand a variety of accountability measures related to education quality and cost, but they do not always agree on desired quality measures or even on the implications of the results (Bogue, 2010). Shupe (1999) has proposed that no less than three enterprises exist simultaneously, and that each has different understandings of producer, process, product, and customer in determining productivity, quality, and accountability. Broad accountability targets include the quality of higher education institutions and programs, college affordability, the return on educational investment, productivity, and efficiency (Gaither, 1995; Alexander, 2000; Ewell, 2002). Legislators often target productivity, efficiency, or workforce development, and seek metrics on enrollment, degree program productivity, six-year graduation rates, and success in acquiring research grants (Ewell, 2008). Employers often consider the college preparation and workforce skills of employees as important, while families of students

consider college costs and the campus environment. External funders may be more interested in research output (Morphew & Toma, 2005), while higher education leaders seek prestige and additional resources (Toma, 2006).

Accreditation. Higher education officials are increasingly tasked with demonstrating accountability to a variety of stakeholders, and accreditation has emerged as a primary driver of accountability (Provezis, 2010). Eaton (2016) provided an overview of accreditation in the U.S. Accreditation was invented in the 19th century by professionals from postsecondary institutions who sought to clarify the boundaries and roles of institutions and the mobility of students through the transfer of credit. Accreditation emerged as a review of higher education institutions and programs to assure and improve academic quality. Eaton also noted that “assuring quality” is about affirming threshold effectiveness of colleges and universities, and “improving quality” is about affirming that performance improves over time (p. 1). Accreditation is a normative feature of American higher education, but it is also a basic requirement for institutions that want to access federal and state funds including student financial aid and federally sponsored programs.

Institutional accreditation is the accreditation process for institutions, and *programmatic accreditation* is the accreditation process for individual programs or schools within colleges (Eaton, 2016). The phases of institutional accreditation review are sequential and typically include an institutional self-study, off-site review, on-site review, judgement, recognition, and the award of accreditation.²² Institutional accreditation is coordinated by regional accrediting agencies and organizations, and all accreditation organizations in the U.S. are accredited by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

²² Overview of Accreditation (Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2012); www.chea.org/

SACSCOC is one of eight regional accrediting organizations with over 800 member institutions in eleven states in the southeastern U.S. SACSCOC-member institutions were featured in this study, so accreditation discussions in this study reference SACSCOC accreditation principles. SACSCOC articulates its expectations for quality and compliance in *Principles of Accreditation* (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2012): “The product of accreditation is a public statement of an institution’s continuing capacity to provide effective programs and services based on agreed upon requirements” (p. 2). *Non-compliance*, the failure to demonstrate compliance in an accreditation criterion, is a judgment of insufficient capacity in a specific activity.

SACSCOC communicates accreditation review findings and corrective expectations through *recommendations*. When an institution fails to demonstrate compliance in a major standard—a Core Requirement, for example, it will receive a public sanction in the form of a warning or even probation. SACSCOC may also sanction an institution if it fails to document sufficient progress towards achieving compliance in other accreditation standards including Comprehensive Standards or Federal Requirements. In severe cases of chronic non-compliance, an institution may be denied reaffirmation and removed from SACSCOC membership (SACSCOC, 2012).

Institutional Effectiveness. In the mid-1980s, the assessment of educational outcomes to demonstrate an institutional effectiveness (IE) emerged as a new accreditation criterion (Nichols, 1989). Ewell (2006), Knapp (2009b) and Alexander (2000) provided rich overviews of the assessment movement. Ewell (2006) defined two forms of assessment: *assessment for accountability* and *assessment for improvement*. Assessment for accountability is designed to respond to external demands of reporting on indicators that demonstrate the institution is meeting

its stated mission and goals. Assessment for improvement is an internal process where findings are used to inform curricular enhancement and innovation.

IE focuses on whether institutions are achieving their missions, and it requires that institutions use assessment evidence in their planning activities to improve student learning. Although institutions have made tremendous progress in developing their campus assessment initiatives, SACSCOC accreditation data shows that a high proportion of institutions were non-compliant in one or more IE standards during a recent reaccreditation review. High rates of non-compliance occurred in Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1: academic programs. (see Tables 1-3 and Appendices A-B) SACSCOC has suggested common issues associated with IE non-compliance includes the lack of defined student learning outcomes and/or methods for assessing the outcomes; poor sampling; and not addressing distance education (Baird, 2013).

Efficiency. Institutions have developed various strategies to increase efficiencies including cost-cutting, process improvement, sustainability programming, and investment in appropriate technologies. Other efficiency activities have included deferred maintenance and outsourcing.²³

Productivity. This accountability form has tended to focus on faculty activities and other outputs such as time in the classroom, time in the office meeting with students, number of publications or presentations, and even public service.

Organizational Effectiveness. Organizational effectiveness²⁴ is another accountability form, but this construct has been criticized because higher education has ambiguous goals that

²³ Paulsen (2011) offers a broader concept of efficiency: as a criterion to evaluate public policy. Browning and Browning, (1994) state that “efficient allocation of resources...through any change in resource allocation” should result if “some person(s) is better off without making someone else worse off” (Paulsen, 96).

²⁴ Organizational effectiveness is not necessarily the same as Institutional Effectiveness as defined and framed by U.S. regional institutional accreditation agencies.

are seldom agreed on, the research construct is not always bounded, and predictors of effectiveness lack validity (Cameron, 1988). Webster (1991) reported on commonly used effectiveness measures including reputational rankings, number of citations, faculty awards/honors, quality of students, and student success after graduation. Institutional rankings and guidebooks have also been increasingly used by various consumers to gauge educational quality (Hossler, 2000), and are among the most frequently used resources used when choosing a college (Hossler & Foley, 1995).

Cameron and Effington (1988) proposed various dimensions of organizational effectiveness that included student satisfaction and success; student personal development and services; faculty satisfaction and professional development; and institutional success in attracting sources and system openness. Quinn and Cameron (1983) suggested that many effectiveness measures focus on mature industries, and that different effectiveness indicators should be used in different organizational phases. Smart and St. John (1989) proposed that culture types (clan, bureaucracy, adhocracy, market) are frames to assess effectiveness. They also found that elements of Chaffee's strategic model mapped to organizational dimensions within their model. Birnbaum (1998) stated that culture types map to governance models, arguing that strength of effectiveness (strength measured by stated values relative to action) is hierarchal (clan, adhocracy, and market) and related to institutional effectiveness.

Management and Strategy

Bastedo (2011) has suggested that higher education and business act and operate similarly. Ruben, Immordino, and Tromp (2009) proposed that "higher education is a business that can be described as the production, dissemination, translation and use of ideas, and the cultivation of learning and learners" (p. 225). These authors also noted that higher education is

like business, healthcare, and the public sectors because it faces similar challenges including competition, consumerism, resources, various stakeholder demands, and the “requirement for an active, engaged and collaborative relationships between providers and consumers” (p. 225). They suggested that viewing higher education institutions in a broader “business / organizational / marketplace” mode can allow the sector to benefit directly from a variety of insights, strategies, tools, and concepts drawn from other sectors (p. 227).

The higher education sector has a tradition of borrowing business practices and applying them with mixed success (Birnbaum, 2001; Chaffee, 1985). Birnbaum (2001) described two academic management revolutions in higher education: the first emphasized “means rather than end” (xii). Its goal was to make higher education more efficient and accountable. The second revolution focused on “ends rather than means” (xii). He characterized these two revolutions as follows: “the first revolution intended to make higher education more businesslike and the second, more like a business” (xii).

Higher education institutions are members of a larger system or super system. There is a dependency of a system “upon the next higher level in the system for which it is a part” (Katz & Kahn, 1978). They seek to obtain resources and legitimacy from their environment, and members seek stability and meaning for their work. Many organizations become resource dependent as they seek external resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1979). Organizations are pressured by external drivers (e.g., accreditors, politicians, the public), yet they seek to control their internal environments through their organizational architecture, systems and processes, culture, and climate. Thus, *institutional context* is influenced by external and internal drivers, and the influence of leaders. This context drives strategies (Alfred, 2006) and plans of action when an environment changes. Higher education institutions also have different levels through which the

institution can be understood and explored. Goodman proposed that these levels include the individual, interpersonal, organizational (as cited in Kezar, 1991). Executive leaders develop vision for the organization, while managers develop strategy and how to operationalize it throughout an organization's structure.

Strategy. Strategy in higher education is a core concept borrowed from business (Chaffee, 1985). It originated from a military context and dates to 550 B.C. (p. 134). Strategy typically requires an advance plan, resources to implement the plan, and adaptability when modifications are required (p. 134). Ansoff, Declerck, and Hayes (1976) introduced *strategic management* in higher education as a response to strategic planning, which they considered a "set of plans and intentions" (p. 15). They contended that strategic management includes the operational management of planning, adapting, and planned learning.

It is commonly accepted that up to 70% of all strategic initiatives in the business sector fail (Charan & Colvin, 1999), and Birnbaum (2001) has reported on frequent failures of management fads in higher education. Failed or flawed initiatives have many symptoms, most of which are traceable to a lack of commitment to the changes needed to formulate strategy and convert it in to action (Alfred, 2006). Porter (1996) contended that the foundation of successful strategy is the selection and execution of hundreds of activities. Alfred (2006) posited that for strategies to be successful there must be several conditions in place: "strategies need to be championed by top leadership and owned by everyone; inclusivity from the top to the bottom of an organization mixed with a sense of urgency; strategy should be conveyed to stakeholders and reinforced through continuous communication; there must be cultural change; and diagnostics to measure constancy and change" (pp. 228-229).

Nobel (1999) provided a model for strategy implementation that consists of four stages. During pre-implementation, leaders need to determine the overall approach to strategy. While organizing the process, it is important to determine capabilities such as skills and expertise. Nobel also stressed that it is important to identify resources such as people, money, and technology; to develop goals and tactics, an implementation plan; identify barriers; and develop appropriate metrics or indicators is also important to determine the eventual impact of a strategy (p. 234). Managing a process or initiative can also be challenging for several reasons. Alfred (2006) has reported that timing, speed, and a sense of urgency are important in strategy implementation. He also noted that because strategy can differ across layers of the organization, obstacles such as failure to communicate adequately with stakeholders can arise. However, developing informal networks can help remove hurdles such as interpretive barriers (Nobel, 1999). Alfred (2006) proposed that "essentially, strategy execution and implementation has all of the attributes and dynamics of a process of organizational change" (p. 230).

Organizational change. Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch have stated that there are fundamentally two different modes of change in the world (as cited in Meyer, Brooks, & Goes, 1990). *Continuous change*, also known as first-order change, has been characterized as a continuous organizational process (March, 1981) that is incremental and predictable. This mode of change occurs within stable systems. This form has received regular attention in the strategic management literature, and response strategies to first-order change have focused on planning and forecasting (Meyer, Brooks, & Goes, 1990). In contrast, *discontinuous change*, or second-order change, transforms fundamental properties or the states of a system (p. 94). These authors classified theories about how organizations maintain alignments with their environments between mode of change and organizational level of change (p. 96). Van de Ven (1995) provided

an overview of four basic theories to help explain processes of change in organizations (life cycle, teleology, dialectics, and evolution) based on sequences of change events, drivers, and level of organizational change.

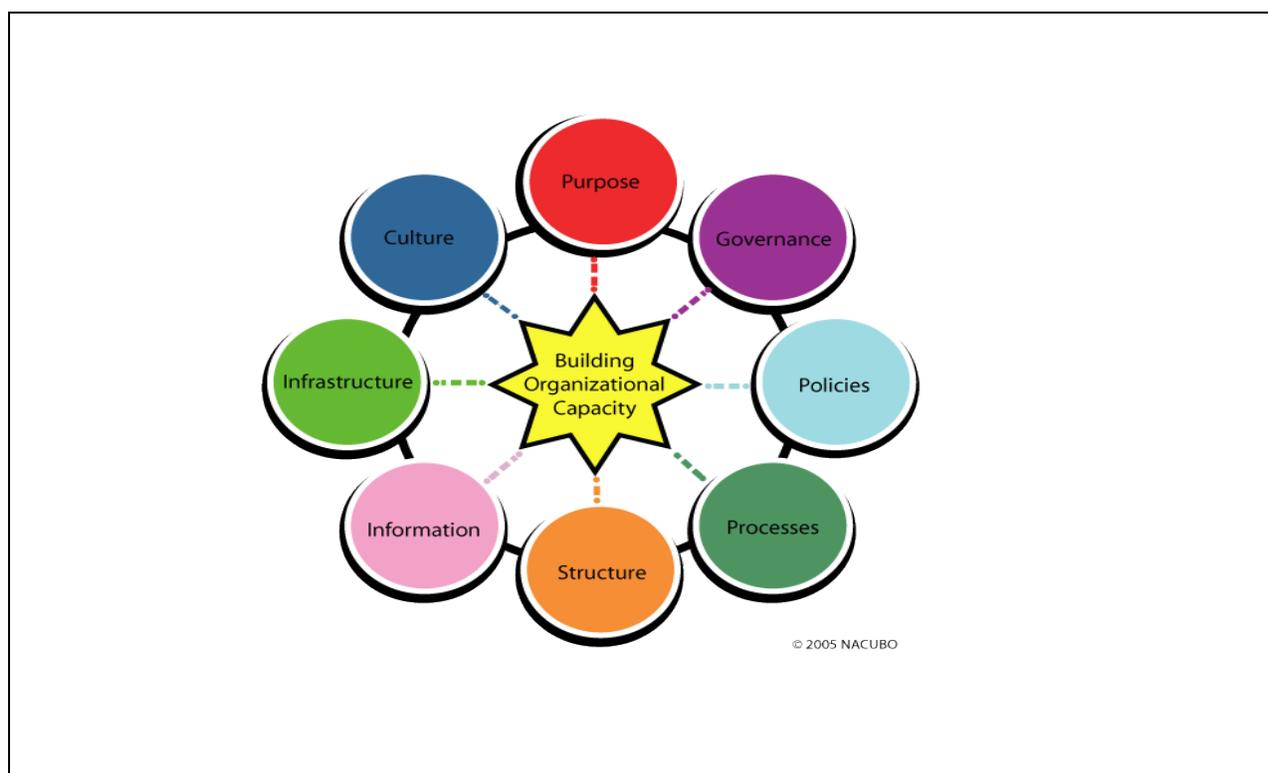
Conceptual Framework

This study is guided by the literatures on accountability, accreditation, and organizational capacity building in higher education. Organizational capacity building models from the business, government, and nonprofit sectors are also considered. Inherent in the concept of capacity building is systems-thinking, an understanding of how organizational elements interact with each other and with the environment. Officials at NACUBO (2005) and subsequently, Toma (2010) proposed an organizational capacity building model for postsecondary institutions.²⁵ Toma defined organizational capacity building as the necessary administration foundation to successfully execute strategy. He also emphasized that systems-thinking is necessary to comprehend and respond to linkages between organizational resources and outcomes, and that it can help in how an organization might respond to the environment. He also reported that capacity for a new initiative seldom develops linearly due to the interplay among multiple organizational elements, and because change in one element necessarily impacts the state of other elements.

The original organizational capacity building framework proposed by NACUBO (see Figure 1) aligns eight organizational elements in a format akin to Galbraith's Star Model for organizational design frameworks (Galbraith, 2005). NACUBO defined capacity as “the capability of individual higher education institutions to anticipate, plan for, and respond effectively to institutional challenges in ways that have continuing impact” (2005). Toma (2010)

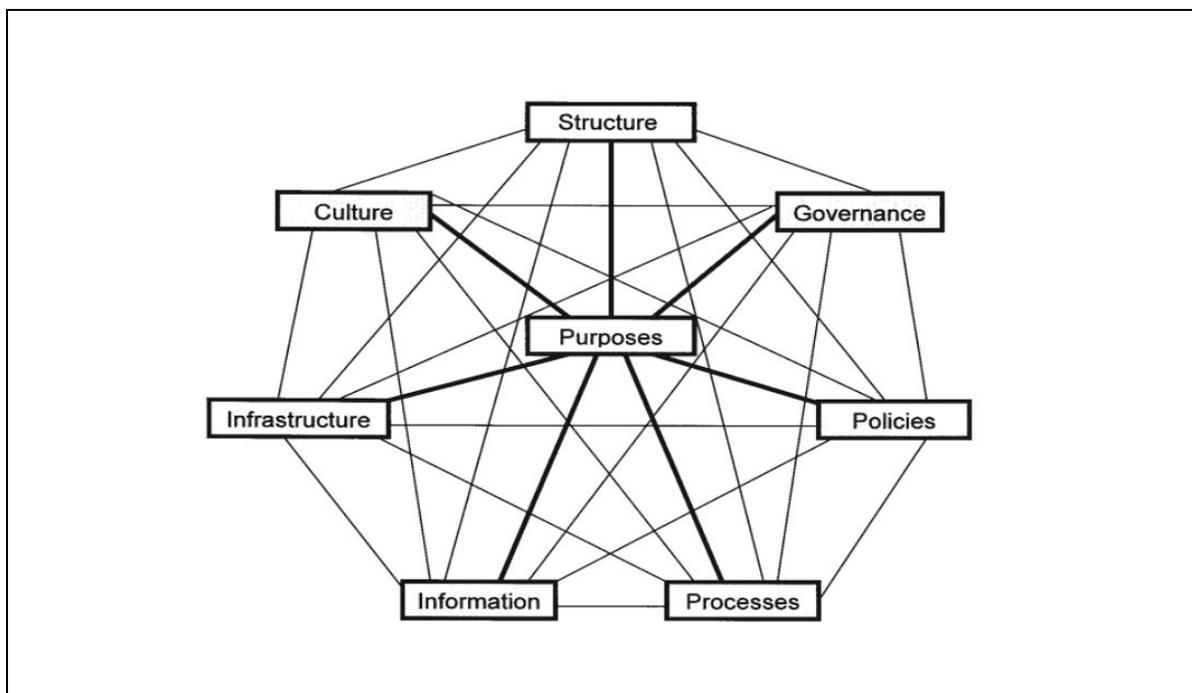
²⁵ Building Organizational Capacity is referred to as BOC by Toma.

described capacity building in higher education institutions as the administrative foundation that is necessary to plan, implement and sustain a campus initiative. Toma refined NACUBO's model by placing *purposes* (one of the eight elements) at the center of the model, and by interconnecting each element. (see Figure 2) These changes reflected his thesis that capacity building emanates from a shared understanding of purposes, broadly defined as “why we are here, and where we are headed” (p. 6). He also noted that changes to one organizational element influences the functioning of other elements.



Source: NACUBO, 2005

Figure 1: NACUBO's Building Organization Capacity Model, 2005



Source: Toma, 2010

Figure 2: Toma's Revised Building Organization Capacity Model, 2010

Organizational capacity building takes place within a system. A *system* is an abstraction of an organization that has multiple parts, and each part is interdependent. A system also has boundaries which delineates the system and the external environment. Depending on how parts of the system interact, the system can be characterized as loosely coupled or tightly coupled. The tighter the coupling, the more likely a change in one system element will produce an expected outcome in another. A system is also either open or closed to its environment, which can help explain an organization's responses to its environment and its success in acquiring resources from the environment.

In a system, change in one element requires adjusting to other elements. The conceptions of organizational fit, good design, and congruence are important organizational design themes that can inform strategy and organizational design considerations. The systems literature

suggests that fit²⁶ is necessary and that organizational elements must be consistent with strategy but also with each other (Galbraith & Kazanjian, 1986). Scott described fit as a “clustering of managerial characteristics” (as cited in Galbraith & Kazanjian, 1986, p. 6), while Miles and Snow defined fit as a “process as well as a state—a dynamic search that seeks to align the organization with its environment and to arrange resources internally in support of that alignment” (as cited in Galbraith & Kazanjian, 1986, p. 11). Miles and Snow also proposed that the basic alignment mechanism is strategy and the internal arrangements are organizational structure and management processes. Galbraith and Kazanjian (1986) posited that continuous internal change limits perfect fit. Waterman, Peters, and Phillips (1980) incorporated fit into their *Seven S's of Strategy*. Leavitt defined fit as “the degree to which task, structure, people and processes form an integrated whole,” and suggested that “organizational change should take all dimensions into account” (as cited in Galbraith & Kazanjian, 1986, p. 109).

Lorsch and Child reinforced the hypothesis of fit related to organizations and to fit between structures or processes (as cited in Galbraith & Kazanjian, p. 109). Child also stated that “consistency among practices, structure and people is what makes [organizations] effective”, and that “inconsistent practices give mixed signals which frustrate managers and weaken their motivation” (p. 109). Dundas and Richardson suggested that the success of strategy is “contingent, in part, on how it is implemented, and having the right strategy is not enough” (as cited in Galbraith & Kazanjian, p. 113).

Good design is concerned with formal or informal processes that shape organizational processes, structures, roles, and strategies. It can include integrating people, information, or technology, and can focus on building competitive advantage or adapting to change in the

²⁶ Other forms of fit include organizational fit and cultural fit.

environment. Good design in organizations should be flexible, adaptable, and sustainable (Bolser, 2016). DiSalvio (2012) has suggested that in organizational design there is a shift underway from “strategy follows structure” to “structure follows strategy” (p. 142). He also noted that “close links among strategy, structure, and the environment” should expand organizational design options rather than constrain them (p. 142). *Congruence* considers the fit among multiple dimensions of organizational design that includes a “technical-structural dimension” (work and the formal organization) and a “social dimension” (people and the organization) (Mercer Delta Consulting, 2004).

Change in higher education is inevitable. Most change initiatives result from environmental drivers, although some can originate internally. It is beneficial for campus leaders to familiarize themselves with the “why, what, and how” of change (Kezar, 2001, p. 11), and with the various typologies of change models. Institutional leaders can also benefit from borrowing various strategies, techniques, and tools from other sectors including business, government, and nonprofit. Capacity building is a useful framework and tool than can be used during the planning, implementation, institutionalization phases of a new initiative. This framework, combined with systems thinking, can contribute to the holistic understanding of the linkages between and among organizational elements.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

This study uses a case study design to explore if and how higher education institutions used organizational capacity building in their campus accreditation initiatives. While there are multiple research methods available to the investigator, this approach has a documented history of usage, especially in psychology, as well as in other disciplines including sociology, social work, business, economics, education, and nursing.²⁷ This method can be used to “contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related complex social phenomena” (Yin, 2014). This method also allows investigators to focus on a *case* and retain a holistic and real-world perspective in phenomenon such as “individual life cycles, small group behavior, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, school performance, international relations, and the maturation of industries” (p. 4). Yin provides a list of steps involved in the case study approach that includes the collection, analysis of data, and the presentation on a compelling topic.

Organizational capacity building is a framework that is regularly applied in business, government, and non-profit sectors. However, more research is needed on how it may be used in other settings, including in higher education institutions. Capacity building is an organizational phenomenon, and traditional or singular research strategies may ignore important themes such as situations, personal accounts, or relationships (Barley & Kunda, 2001). A qualitative methods framework was chosen for this study since this approach allows for the exploration of a social or

²⁷ Yin (2014) also notes that case studies have been a common research method in political science, anthropology, and community planning.

human problem (Creswell, 2009) or a phenomenon (Yin, 2014). This approach also helps in the understanding of how individuals or groups ascribe meaning to problems (Creswell, 2009).

This study is based on the philosophical foundation or worldview of *social constructionism*²⁸ that assumes that individuals engage the world to seek understanding and subjective meaning of objects or things, rather than relying on something that has been “imprinted” (Creswell, 2009, p. 9). Meaning is based on personal history and social perspectives, and can be “varied and multiple” (p. 8). Time, context and setting are important considerations in this approach since they help define and bound individual experiences, meaning, and cases. Creswell (2009) also notes that it is the researcher’s role to interact with participants to help establish meaning of phenomenon, and to seek complexity rather than more narrow meanings that others have of the world.

Case Selection

Purposeful sampling was employed due to the impracticality of engaging the population of higher education institutions (Creswell, 2009). This study was guided by recent accreditation data that showed that many postsecondary institutions failed to demonstrate compliance in their initiatives related to IE (SACSCOC 2015, 2014, 2013; Provezis, 2010).

Four criteria were used for case selection. First, institutions must have received negative findings for their IE initiatives related to assessment of academic programs. An Internet search provided links to over 20 institutions that posted their recent accreditation results. Second, institutions must have demonstrated compliance in IE by their next accreditation review cycle. Third, institutions must be the same institutional type (either public or private). Fourth, institutions must be members of the same institutional accreditation region. This was important

²⁸ Social constructionism is also referred to as constructionism and interpretivism.

since institutions within the same accreditation region must follow the same accreditation standards, including those for IE. The SACSCOC accreditation region was chosen since many of the institutions that posted their recent accreditation findings were SACSCOC members. Finally, institutions within SACSCOC must also be in the same, local geographic region. This criterion was necessary since the SACSCOC region spans 11 states and thousands of miles, and travel considerations needed to be practical. Table 5 provides a list of accreditation review cycles and results for institutions featured in this study.

Table 5

Accreditation Review Cycle and Reviewer Recommendations, by Institution

Institution	Accreditation Review Cycle	Reviewer Recommendation to Study Institution Related to Non-Compliance
Frontier U.	2010*	3.3.1.1 (Educational Programs); 3.3.1.2 (Administrative Support Services); 3.3.1.3 (Academic and Student Support Services); 3.3.1.4 (Research); 3.3.1.5 (Community / Public Service)
Garden State U.	2005**	3.3.1.1 (Educational Programs)
Bay U.	2010**	3.3.1.1 (Educational Programs)

*10-Year Reaccreditation Review: a review that includes all accreditation standards

**Fifth-Year Interim Report: a review that includes a subset of accreditation standards including IE 3.3.1.1: educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

Note: Comments from evaluators related to non-compliance were provided in formal reports to institutions, but were not available to this study.

The Case Study Institutions

The three institutions selected for this study are similar in multiple institutional characteristics. Frontier University, Garden State University, and Bay University, the pseudonyms assigned to study institutions, were used to ensure anonymity to the institutions and participants. Hereafter, “University” in each study institution’s name will be abbreviated by “U.”

Frontier U., a four-year public institution, offers a rural campus setting within a state that had at the time of the study reduced funding to higher education institutions for the past several years. It is a flagship institution with multiple satellite campuses. It has a very large undergraduate enrollment population, including students enrolled in online programs, and offers 92 undergraduate degrees, and 101 graduate programs, including the doctorate. Garden State U. is a satellite campus of the state’s flagship institution, and is in a mid-size city. It has a large undergraduate enrollment population, including students enrolled in online programs. It offers degrees in 43 undergraduate programs and 30 graduate programs, including the doctorate. Bay U. is a four-year, doctoral research institution. It is a single campus within the state’s higher education system. It is located in a remote town, and has no additional satellite locations. It has a very large undergraduate enrollment population, including students enrolled in online programs. It offers degrees in 56 undergraduate programs and 62 graduate programs, including the doctorate. Over 10 of its programs have programmatic accreditations.

Participants

The primary source of data for this study was through the experiences of various campus leaders at postsecondary institutions in the U.S. Interviews were conducted with 19 institutional leaders with accreditation, IE, or assessment responsibilities. Study participants included executive leaders, middle managers, assessment office staff, department assessment liaisons,

faculty members involved in assessment within their colleges, and members of campus committees with responsibilities in accreditation, IE, or assessment. Table 6 provides a list of study participants and their respective institutional roles and perspectives.

Table 6

Institutional Roles and Assessment Perspectives of Study Participants

Institution	Position(s)/Role(s)	Assessment Perspective
Frontier U.	Vice President, Student Affairs	Institutional Effectiveness
Frontier U.	Assessment Director	Academic, Administrative
Frontier U.	Dean, Graduate School	SACSCOC accreditation
Frontier U.	Vice President, Student Support	SACSCOC accreditation
Garden State U.	Assessment Director	IE, College, General Education
Garden State U.	Student Affairs Assessment Director	Student Affairs
Garden State U.	Faculty, Assessment Director	Departmental, Program
Garden State U.	College Assessment Director	Program
Garden State U.	Director, Quality Enhancement Plan	Quality Enhancement Plan
Bay U.	Senior Assoc. Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (includes Institutional Research, Institutional Assessment)	Student Affairs
Bay U.	Associate Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	Enrollment Management
Bay U.	Interim Assessment Director, Professor	Institutional Assessment
Bay U.	Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	Enrollment Management
Bay U.	Assoc. Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness	Institutional Effectiveness
Bay U.	College Provost	Academic Affairs

Source: Study participant interviews

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection involved field research at selected postsecondary institutions, and focused on campus stakeholders with various accreditation, IE, and assessment responsibilities and experiences. This study used interviews to explore organizational capacity building at these

institutions. Interviews with participants were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. A description for each case was developed, and cases are provided in Chapter 4. Other data sources included documents, interviews, archival records, and physical artifacts. In this study, documents included items that were available on institutional websites or those presented during interviews. These included memoranda, written reports, and administrative documents. Archival records included organizational charts, lists of names, and institutional calendars. Care was given to not attribute absolute or extraneous meaning to these documents since the actual contexts and target populations of these documents were unknown.

Reliability and Validity

Various activities were used to ensure reliability and validity for this study. According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009), “Validity has in the social sciences pertained to whether a method investigates what it purports to investigate” (p. 249). Yin (2003) proposed, and I have, documented all procedures and steps used in this study. Also, a study protocol was developed and approved by my home institution as well as by Institutional Review Boards (IRB) for the three participating sites. The volume of data collected from documents and artifacts were substantial, and required me to organize the data. In addition, I coded documents per topical area, and I used pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of participating institutions and interviewees.

Data saturation was important to seeking new ideas and data that might uncover alternate explanations (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation was sought through member checking and the usage of various documents for comparison of interview data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Creswell (2009) proposed, and I used, additional strategies including the discussion of researcher bias, the presentation of negative / discrepant information, and peer briefing. These strategies and their implementations are further discussed below.

Research findings have limited generalizability to the population of higher education institutions since the study sample was based on criteria that included accreditation non-compliance and institutional classification, attributes that can vary within an accreditation region. Also, these criteria do not equally apply to all postsecondary institutions in the U.S. given the broad diversity of institutions, uniqueness of regional accreditation standards, and variability in the maturity of campus initiatives.

IRB approval was obtained from The University of Georgia as the sponsoring research institution, as well as from each study institution. An initial study invitation was sent to institutional leaders in central administration accountability offices, with a request for a follow-up phone call to confirm institutional interest.

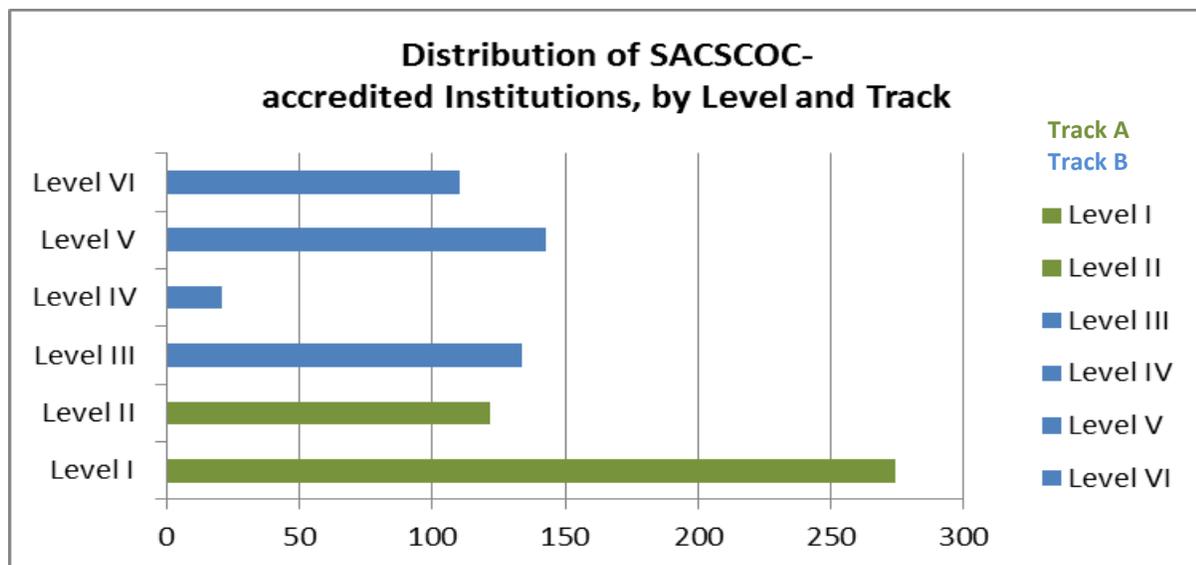
Sample Selection

Data collection required that a target sample be identified and achieved. Employing criterion sampling as a strategy, all higher education institutions in the U.S. that had achieved compliance in IE following a period of non-compliance became the target population of this study. Much of the accreditation data used in this study is useful for high-level exploration of the phenomenon of accreditation non-compliance, including in IE. These data are aggregated by institutional characteristics or accreditation review cycle, and do not include identifying information on institutions. Since organizational capacity building was the focus of this study, it seemed reasonable to treat compliance as a marker of successful capacity building activity. An Internet scan of institutions was conducted in fall, 2013 to discover incidents of accreditation non-compliance in IE followed by successful demonstration of compliance.

Many institutions were initially identified that met the study's criteria, and so a strategy about sample size was required. Lincoln and Guba (1995) recommended sample selection "to the

point of redundancy, when no new information is forthcoming” (p. 202). Based on practical considerations of travel and the anticipated constraint of work schedules, a minimum sample of three institutions was established with the expectation that this would provide “reasonable coverage of the phenomenon” (Patton, 1990, p. 186). The decision to use multiple cases (versus only one case) was also intended to increase the validity and meaningfulness of study findings (Yin, 2013). Patton has noted a sampling trade-off between breadth and depth in sampling (e.g., a larger number of institutions versus in-depth information from a small number of people), but that the real goal of sampling should be “information richness” (p. 184). To achieve this goal, three institutions and campus leaders with varying experiences in accreditation, IE, and assessment were invited to participate in this study.

The SACSCOC accreditation region was selected as the research target due to its early incorporation of IE standards, and for logistical considerations of conducting fieldwork for this accreditation region. After reviewing multiple SACSCOC accreditation datasets, the stratification of SACSCOC institutions, and the availability of Internet-posted accreditation information by postsecondary institutions, Level V institutions emerged as the focus for this research. These institutions offer three or fewer doctorates as the highest degrees, and represent the second larger grouping of SACSCOC-member institutions. Seven SACSCOC Level V institutions were identified as potential research sites because of the availability of accreditation information on their websites that matched the study’s criteria. Figure 3 provides a distribution of SACSCOC-accredited institutions by institutional level and accreditation track.



Source: SACSCOC, 2015

Figure 3: Distribution of SACSCOC-accredited Institutions, by Level and Track

IE and assessment leaders for each institution were contacted by e-mail, and provided with a brief introduction to the research study. A follow-up phone call was conducted with institutions that conveyed interest in the study. This exchange provided an opportunity for initial introductions and an in-depth discussion of study details. It also allowed for early planning of field visits if the institution expressed interest in the study. A follow-up e-mail to study institutions requested a confirmation of the institution's commitment to the study. Each institution was also provided a Consent Form to distribute to study participants prior to site visits. This form outlined the research framework, and provided principle investigator and IRB contact information. Site contacts were also identified and asked to assist with interview scheduling and logistics. Realizing the inherent intrusiveness of site visits, advanced coordination of details was crucial to ensuring efficient and effective meetings. Final site visit details were communicated through e-mails and phone calls.

Four institutions committed to participating in this study, but one institution withdrew during the first month after realizing that many staff with first-hand knowledge of the institution's recent accreditation review had accepted employment positions at other campuses. The site contact also expressed concern that the insights of remaining staff members and of new hires might not contribute substantively to this study. The remaining three study institutions were similar in various institutional characteristics including control (public), degrees offered (undergraduate and graduate), accreditation membership (SACSCOC), and geographic location (within a half-day's driving distance).

About the Institutions

Research was conducted using qualitative fieldwork at three public research universities located in the southeast U.S. All institutions had a predominant undergraduate focus, and had mostly residential campuses.²⁹ One institution was a flagship institution with multiple satellite campuses. Another institution was a satellite campus of the state's flagship institution. The third institution was a single campus within the state's higher education system. All institutions were members of SACSCOC, and similarly classified as Level V institutions.

Study participants had accreditation, IE, or assessment responsibilities at their current institution or at a previous one. The participant with the shortest tenure was a director of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), although this person had previously served for several years as a faculty member. Table 7 provides a summary of study participants and tenure lengths for their current position or institutional roles. IE and assessment was a full-time responsibility for many interviewees, and for others it was a part-time responsibility in addition to their teaching and research responsibilities.

²⁹ IPEDS data

Table 7

Tenure of Study Participants

Pseudonym	Institution	Position(s)/Role(s)	Tenure
Bob	Frontier U.	Vice President, Student Affairs	2008
Suzie	Frontier U.	Assessment Director	2014
Karen	Frontier U.	Dean, Graduate School	2006
Stan	Frontier U.	Vice President, Student Support	2004
Sandy	Garden State U.	Assessment Director	2008
William	Garden State U.	Assessment Director, Student Affairs	2011
Penny	Garden State U.	Faculty, Assessment Director	2003
Cindy	Garden State U.	College Assessment Director	2011
George	Garden State U.	Director, Quality Enhancement Plan	2014
Alice	Bay U.	Senior Assoc. Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (Institutional Research, Institutional Assessment)	2001
Vaughn	Bay U.	Associate Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	2006
Dana	Bay U.	Interim IE Assessment Director; Professor	2001
Cynthia	Bay U.	Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	2011
Evelyn	Bay U.	Assoc. VP, Institutional Effectiveness; Instructor	2011
Francis	Bay U.	College Provost	2012

Source: Study participant interviews (*information not provided)

Table 8 provides a listing of various institutional characteristics for each study institution.

Table 8

Summary of Selected Institutional Characteristics, by Institution

Institutional Characteristics	Frontier U.	Garden State U.	Bay U.
Carnegie Classification*	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	Doctoral/ Research Universities
Institutional type*	4-year or above	4-year or above	4-year or above
Institutional control*	Public	Public	Public
Campus setting*	Rural: Fringe	City: Midsize	Town: Remote
Campus locations (within state)	Multiple	1	1
Campus locations (out of state)	Yes	No	No
International campus	Yes	No	No
Undergraduate enrollment*	Very large	Large	Very large
Graduate enrollment (% total)	20	11	13
^Student: Teacher ratio	22:1	17:1	19:1
Leadership development program	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colleges and Schools (includes Graduate School but not Undergraduate Studies, International Studies, Distance Learning)	6	6	8
Highest degree offered	Doctorate	Doctorate	Doctorate
Online programs, degrees	Yes	Yes	Yes
Undergraduate majors/programs	92	43	56
Graduate programs/certificates	101	30	62
Certificate programs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Programs for Service Members and Veterans*	5 or more	<5	<5
Distance education programs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Programmatic accreditations*	5-10	Under 5	10 or more
Programmatic accreditations*	5-10	Under 5	10 or more
NCAA participation	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Institutional websites and documents, IPEDS data, *Carnegie Classification (<http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/>); ^Career Index data (<http://www.educationnews.org/career-index/>) is based on U.S. Department of Education - Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics in 2010.

Participants proposed a variety of external factors that had contributed to their institution's failure to demonstrate compliance in IE. These included limited time constraints to implement new accreditation standards, and disagreement among SACSCOC reviewers related to evaluator findings. They also reported internal factors that included insufficient assessment processes, incomplete or low quality assessment records, and lack of consensus on the purposes of assessment. Table 9 provides a list of contributing factors to institutional non-compliance reported by study participants.

Table 9

Contributing Factors to Non-compliance in Institutional Effectiveness Reported by Study Participants

Institution	Contributing Factor	Rank
Frontier U.	Record completeness and use of results	1
Frontier U.	Technology failure	2
Frontier U.	Discordant SACSCOC reviewer judgments	3
Garden State U.	Insufficient longevity in assessment	1
Garden State U.	SACSCOC standards were new	2
Garden State U.	Slow institutional adoption of IE, new standards	3
Bay U.	Insufficient number of assessment cycles	1
Bay U.	Insufficient staff support	2
Bay U.	Lack of full institutional adoption of IE	3

Source: Study participant interviews

Data Collection Methods

Institutional websites and posted artifacts were reviewed prior to site visits. Research themes that were explored included institutional mission, history, organizational characteristics including people and structures, and accreditation history. Information gathered from these resources provided a foundational understanding of each institution that was useful during interviews and later when developing institutional descriptions and cases.

One-day site visits to each study institution occurred in spring, 2014. Visits were organized around one-on-one interviews that occurred in campus meeting rooms and staff offices. Institutions were remarkably hospitable and gracious in coordinating one-hour interviews with various campus stakeholders. Participants were asked to provide their insights on the capacity building that had occurred at their institutions. Interview discussions were guided by the following open-ended questions:

1. Please discuss your current role as [title] as it relates to Institutional Effectiveness and assessment at [name of institution].
2. Please tell me how [name of institution] responded after receiving recommendations in Institutional Effectiveness in a previous accreditation review.
3. Tell me why you think [name of institution] is successful in its current Institutional Effectiveness initiative.
4. What do you see as threats to sustaining your current Institutional Effectiveness initiative?

Data Analysis Procedures

Fifteen interviews produced approximately 20 hours of recorded discussion. Field notes were used to supplement interview data, and included notations of key study participant comments or themes that emerged during interviews. Other notes included observations on campus cultural elements and the design features of campuses and buildings. Because participants were assured anonymity, detailed information about specific campus features, structures or landmarks were not mentioned in this paper. Recorded interviews were later transcribed with technical assistance, and initial case descriptions for each institution were developed. These case descriptions were provided to campus leaders for their review, with a

request that they provide feedback on the accuracy of details. After additional refinement, case descriptions and participant responses were incorporated into cases for each institution. Those cases are provided in Chapter 4.

Microsoft Word® was used to analyze word counts and to identify patterns or clustering or words or themes. Cross-case analysis was then used to identify patterns that emerged across institutions including events that preceded non-compliance in IE, the capacity building activities that occurred and interaction between and among organizational elements, and factors that may threaten current IE initiatives. This analysis yielded categories and subcategories that emerged from the interviews, and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study examined if and how institutions built organizational capacity for their campus initiatives related to accreditation. Campus leaders from selected four-year doctoral-granting universities in the U.S. were asked to provide insight on recent capacity building activities directed at achieving compliance in their campus initiatives in Institutional Effectiveness (IE). Findings from this study revealed that all three study institutions demonstrated compliance in IE following a period of capacity building. It also found that executive leaders and staff with experience in accreditation played important roles. Capacity building activities the addition of new assessment staff, improvement of processes and procedures, and the adoption of new technologies. Notably, the positioning of new staff outside of central assessment offices and the expansion of committee work to of accreditation and assessment coordination and support implied that IE initiatives had become more decentralized.

CASES

A description of each study institution is provided below, and each case is organized using a similar structure. First, background information on the period leading up to organizational capacity building in IE is provided. The next section examines the various capacity building activities that occurred at each institution. Finally, I discuss the perceived threats to sustaining current campus IE initiatives.

Case I: Frontier University

Background

About a year prior to the Frontier U.'s reaccreditation review, the university hired a senior leader with broad experience in corporate quality assurance and higher education accountability. This person succeeded a retiring incumbent and oversaw a consolidated office that included institutional research (IR), institutional planning, and IE. The incumbent stayed on at the institution for a short period after his retirement to offer a "smooth transition" (Bob). This was also a time when SACSCOC accreditation changes were occurring in response to criticisms from the U.S. Department of Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation.^{30 31} "There was a lot more pressure on SACS to conduct more thorough reviews, and to double-up more into this area of Institutional Effectiveness" (Bob). Given the institution's stability in leadership and in its assessment activities, there was high confidence that the institution would have no issues with its upcoming 10-year accreditation review.

In the fall of 2010, the institution's accreditation was reaffirmed, but the university also received recommendations in IE and online programs. These recommendations came as a big surprise to many on campus since officials had been preparing for reaccreditation for some time, and because early feedback from off-site reviewers suggested that the institution was in good shape.³² Two incidents likely impacted these accreditation outcomes. First, a feature of accreditation review is to provide access to assessment records (typically three years of records).

³⁰ CHEA is recognized by the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Department of Education to accredit regional institutional accrediting organizations. CHEA represents more than 3,000 colleges and universities and 60 national, regional and specialized accreditors. <http://www.chea.org/>

³¹ See Rogers, J. T. (1986) for additional context.

³² Reaffirmation for accredited institutions involves several phases including the submission of the institution's Compliance Certification report, an off-site peer review, an on-site review committee, and confirmation of reaffirmation. SACSCOC reviewers are volunteers from peer institutions with specific expertise that are assigned areas of the reaffirmation review.

At Frontier U., these records had been hosted by a home-grown assessment management system for years. During the reaccreditation site visit the system failed, a development which some considered “catastrophic” (Karen) in terms of reviewer perceptions of the institution’s assessment infrastructure. Another interviewee provided a slightly different perspective on this incident: “I don’t think we would have had a clean bill of health if the system didn’t crash the way it did because the reports coming out of there weren’t stellar ... and I think this team decided it wasn’t good enough before they got to that presentation where it crashed” (Suzie).

A second issue emerged during the site visit. Initial feedback from off-site reviewers suggested that the institution was in good shape in terms of its IE initiative, yet disagreement arose during the on-site review. Accreditation reviewers are volunteers from peer SACSCOC-member institutions who are considered seasoned experts in their fields. As reviewers on accreditation teams, they are expected to contribute unique evaluation perspectives to the accreditation review process. This process also involves making collective professional judgements.³³ Reviewer disagreement is anticipated at times during the review process, but review teams typically reach consensus. For Frontier U., consensus on the institution’s compliance in IE did not occur between the on-site team leader and team evaluators, which caught campus leaders by surprise.

Capacity Building Activities

Even though campus officials were surprised by the outcome of its accreditation review, they knew a timely response was required. Debate on how the institution should proceed generated various comments and concerns ranging from, “assessment does not necessarily mean improvement” and improvement is “very difficult to show” (Bob). Campus leaders decided to

³³ SACSCOC Expectations for Reviewers (see <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/handbooks/Exhibit%2018.HandbookForReviewCommittees.pdf>)

direct strategy and energy toward addressing the “issue of capacity.” The institution’s chancellor was front-and-center in the institution’s response as it set about embracing the need for change, and he found that deans and staff were particularly “responsive and receptive” (Bob).

The institution’s strategy for building capacity in IE was developed in early 2011, and several ambitious recommendations were presented to and approved by the chancellor. A key strategy of moving forward on recommendations was to “get everyone in the right kind of place” (Bob). One of the first recommendations was to hire a director of assessment, which occurred that same year. Another important step was to create five new faculty positions (one for each college) to coordinate assessment activities in their colleges. These coordinators were tasked to work with department chairs and faculty members within their colleges to plan and implement assessment, and to compile assessment records. College deans were tasked with signing-off on assessment records, and then records were uploaded to the assessment management system by a newly hired administrative assistant in the university’s central assessment office.

Related to technology and the management of assessment information, the institution’s prior system had hosted PowerPoint® presentations of assessment activity, but this system failed during the institution’s reaccreditation on-site review. Frontier U. embraced commercial technologies to stabilize its infrastructure and to expand its capacity to manage information. Compliance Assist® was implemented to host the existing reporting system, and other technologies including Live Text® and Blackboard® were added to help measure student learning at various phases in academic careers. The new assessment management system is accessible by the chancellor and various institutional leaders, and has been used to support the institution’s mission and various initiatives through data-driven decision-making.

Institutional leaders also realized the need to stay ahead of ever-expanding accountability demands that may outpace their resources: Having this “extra set of eyes ... helps make sure we’re remaining current with everything.” Vendors are “staying up to speed” by introducing additional modules as accreditation standards are revised (Bob). Another study participant justified the institution’s technology investments by offering a broader perspective:

Choosing the right technology and presenting and articulating data is important since on reviews, many institutions have sunk on their software choices. Institutional Effectiveness reporting is mostly qualitative in nature, and software “helps afford consistency and reporting across the institution. Getting faculty to use existing technologies can be a challenge, and Institutional Effectiveness staff can only use encouragement and persuasion with recalcitrant faculty. (Karen)

One interviewee noted that such faculty members make up only a small percentage of faculty stakeholders. Training on these technologies is now provided to college assessment coordinators and faculty. Training on new processes and procedures is also provided.

While a standard student learning rubric had been developed and later adopted by the institution, it eventually became apparent that some colleges such as the College of Arts and Sciences had to manage various specialized program accreditations in addition to institutional accreditation. Campus leaders ultimately decided to allow colleges “flexibility in how you’re going to design your student learning outcomes. Everybody has to have student learning outcomes, and everyone has to have rubrics for showing what those are. But they can use different approaches from that point on” (Bob). The planning and implementation of a collection of institutional responses have brought the institution an “incredible level of conversation among faculty about results. They talk about it now. There is an old saying: ‘That which gets measured

is what gets done.’ Frontier U. has become more deliberate in its efforts through an attention to processes since faculty are more self-aware ... [by] reflecting more on what they’re trying to accomplish” (Bob). Another study participant suggested, “The push for better processes is helpful because they are now more meaningful and they’re seeing results used for improvement” (Karen).

Ultimately, a cultural change is what many institutional leaders are seeing or expecting. The university has attempted to document policies and procedures in an IE handbook (Suzie). Because there are “old people in new roles in some many places that Institutional Effectiveness exists,” the migration of the handbook to a Web format is in the works. It’s still a “work in progress”, and it’ll be important “to let people know it exists” (Suzie).

Frontier U. also expanded its use of committees to guide the planning, monitoring, and communication of assessment activities. These included an Institutional Effectiveness Committee made up of faculty and staff from across the university that was charged with reviewing and commenting on all assessment records. It also included college assessment coordinators, the director of assessment, and a chancellor’s office representative. It met monthly (ten times a year) and broke out into subcommittees that reviewed a portion of assessment records. This subcommittee highlighted things that needed to be strengthened, recognized records that were exemplary, and reported its findings to the full committee (Suzie).

Another campus committee was charged with monitoring changes in accreditation standards. Committee members started attending the SACSCOC Annual Meeting. This event provided members with an opportunity to learn best practices from accreditation leaders and to network with peers from other institutions. Attendees brought back information from the conference and then shared new developments with committee members. The committee met

regularly to discuss assessment issues such as changes to accreditation standards and federal requirements that may have emerged. This was considered important since SACSCOC posts accreditation changes to its website, and member institutions are expected to review this resource for updates.

Another interviewee offered an anecdote on the importance of remaining current of accreditation changes, and how the university had proactively responded to an accreditation standard change.

SACSCOC Federal Requirement 4.6 requires institutions to post and track student complaints. So we designed a place on the website that would say, complaints go here. There is a form that you fill out. You get sent to one of four directions depending upon the nature of the complaint. Each of those offices keeps a record of the complaints that they have received. Because of this vigilant monitoring of SACSCOC standards, the institution felt adequately prepared on this standard for its upcoming five-year review.

(Bob)

Frontier U. also sponsored an Academic Steering Committee that met bimonthly, where a SACSCOC update was provided to members. This committee pre-existed the 2010 reaccreditation review, but the committee decided to meet to discuss SACSCOC and related accreditation topics on a recurring basis. “SACS [is] in the forefront, and that “mindset of SACS being that constant has really helped us” (Suzie). This committee was composed of deans, campus representatives, online campus representatives, the registrar, and high-level people from across the campus.

A developing area of concern for the institution for its next accreditation review as well as for its overall sustainability was student enrollment. Enrollment had declined some during the

past three years. A notable portion of institution's enrollment was served through the e-Army program and other online programs, but reduction in e-Army payments for tuition and the influx of competitors that placed their programs on-line impacted enrollments. The University responded by cutting back on hiring new faculty, and shifted to better maximizing existing faculty and adjunct time. The economic decline of the Great Recession had allowed the institution to hire highly-quality adjuncts who were interested in flexible teaching arrangements that allowed for teaching, research, and time to live at the beach (Bob). The institution's new capacity in assessment and Institutional Effectiveness allowed it to adequately monitor and respond to these types of game-changing developments. The larger context was maintaining enrollment, which was vital to the institution's overall sustainability. It was also a critical element of SACSCOC accreditation (Comprehensive Standard 3.10.1: Financial Stability). Failure in any comprehensive standard could have put the institution's accreditation status at risk. The loss of institutional accreditation could have diminished the university's reputation, and impacted its participation in federal financial aid and research programs and the transfer of academic credit.

Study participants at Frontier U. reported that leadership, especially senior leadership, was essential to successfully building and sustaining institutional initiatives. The chancellor supported the idea of employees being "lifetime learners," and assembled "several people with a lot of depth in terms of dealing with SACS" (Suzie). These leaders had previously served on SACSCOC review teams, and had remained engaged in accreditation by attending conferences. They shared a passion for building a great university, and understood that accreditation expectations change and reviewer interpretations can vary. One study participant noted, "I think

that it's OK if we make mistakes within our system as long as we're working and striving to make everything better" (Suzie).

The importance of having an experienced core team that was familiar with SACSCOC and the institutional reaccreditation process was a common theme conveyed by other participants as well. Stan noted:

While some [leaders] slipped into the role, others have been specifically hired for roles or have been promoted from within. Many leaders have over 15 years of experience, and one member has served on more than 20 SACSCOC review teams. One team member brings accreditation experience from prior work at a larger institution, and has expertise in quality management. Team members are swapped in and out. This provided a break for existing members, and provides less seasoned ones an opportunity to learn. It seems to be working like that for us, and that's a good feeling. This team takes Institutional Effectiveness and assessment seriously, and is committed to positioning and reporting the institution and its progress. We are committed to an authentic understanding of how we're doing.

The institution also had a legacy of stable leadership, including the chancellor who had been at Frontier U. the longest among senior leaders (over 25 years). There's also a history of promoting from within, although there were exceptions as noted by one study participant. Hiring and developing good people, and personality were also considered important, "especially a personality that says I'm really trying to help the institution. We have a lot of that here" (Stan). "We're not all stars, and in many cases there are overlaps, but there's a sense that individually we are who we are ... but collectively it's at a different kind of level" (Stan). This collective team effort "requires diligence on part of leadership and [also a] commitment by faculty, to make

sure that we evidence the importance of continuous improvement related to student learning” (Karen). A sense of collegiality was also considered especially important when reviewing each other’s work. This collegiality was based on a shared commitment of “taking the university forward” (Stan).

Experience and stable leadership were mentioned several times as essential elements of a successful IE initiative. The economic decline during the Great Recession had postponed many on campus to delay their retirements, but interviews noted that many campus leaders would be retiring in the next five years. Building the next generation thus became one of the chancellor’s top priorities. The Chancellor’s Fellows Program was an initiative designed to cultivate future institutional leaders. It also served to ensure institutional continuity. Each year four or five faculty and staff members from across the institution were chosen to participate in this program. They learned about the university and were tasked to advance an important [institutional] issue” (Suzie). Fellows met with an assigned mentor from various locations from the university, and they collaborated on a project such as Study Abroad. At the end of the training program they delivered a report to the Academic Steering Committee. The chancellor provided the necessary resources to guide and sustain the efforts of this program.

So this is our way of preparing leaders for leadership for the future. To date, over 50 fellows have completed the program including a current college assessment coordinator, and we have seen that chancellor’s fellows are promoted frequently up the ranks. Over 95% of our Chancellor’s Fellows stay at the university and take leadership roles. This program creates a nice pool of people with university-wide knowledge. (Suzie)

“Luckily, younger faculty members are being raised in a culture of assessment” (Karen), which she perceived as a positive development that will benefit the institution in the long-run.

Messaging was also considered an important organizational feature. “Sometimes it was top-down, and was how the university conveyed its expectations -- through reports, training, workshops, and presentations” (Karen). The chancellor has also famously stated, “Measure what you say you want to achieve,” but he also put forth quite a bit of money and staff people to back up his challenge (Suzie). Bottom-up messaging and communication originating from campus committees was also considered crucial in successful capacity building. Frontier U. had three committees that specifically focused on and regularly reported on SACSCOC and accreditation issues. One study participant conveyed the mindset of committees and their perception of their work with the following:

A mindset of not dwelling on we thought we were doing it right and it's only about SACS won't work. Rather, an ethos made up of three specific components: specific knowledge, character, and good will really clicks here. We're going to be honest and authentic, and we're going to be transparent. When it's everyone's mission and obligation, when we're all engaged in the idea that we're trying to be better, it works.

(Stan)

Suzie added:

Maintaining positive relationships with key assessment contacts across the university is also very important, especially to learn when they may be having problems or when there's a need to make changes to technology or accreditation expectations which may upset faculty. There's a human piece that's important in all of this, and I think that relational piece gets lost when we talk about policies and procedures ... we can't forget that they're still people.”

Sustaining Campus IE Initiatives

Faculty members believed that teaching was the predominant activity on campus, yet many faculty members had taken on additional program assessment responsibilities as well as specialized accreditation reporting. Some college assessment coordinators were only part-time faculty, while others were full-time. Suzie expressed her concern for one college assessment coordinator:

She's still teaching a full load. To be very honest, she stays here very late, every night, working on reports for the college, and I'm afraid we're going to wear her out. If overload threatens the completeness or quality of reporting, the director of assessment engages the coordinator to offer assistance. If this does not improve the situation, assessment leaders then engage the college dean to reinforce the importance of this exercise and to seek solutions.

There had also been quite a bit of reorganization at the institution including the consolidation of multiple instructional delivery modalities (classroom and online) and site locations and incorporating them within departments. "So, as positive as those reorganization efforts have been, there's always the chance that it could upset the cart" (Suzie). For example, as the university moved to centralize efforts of online education, the number of contacts declined. At the time of the study, there were also several interim positions in key roles. Study participants expressed their concern that new leadership might change or end improvement initiatives that were currently underway, or that they may enact new ones.

To improve assessment processes following the receipt of recommendations in 2010, Frontier U. developed a standard student learning assessment template that incorporated

flexibility to accommodate various assessment techniques. This caused some resistance in the new way of conducting assessment:

Department chairs have challenges that have to be overcome before the coordinator for assessment can get all the reports together. It's not new information. It's just this change in organization. You'd think it'd make it less challenging to gather all the data, but because we're looking at a previous timeframe and maybe some personnel issues could have happened – we lost faculty, maybe faculty left, maybe data existed on a personal computer. There are any number of things that could have happened to cause these challenges. Also, some accreditations stress formative assessment more than summative assessment. If this were to change, then it may hurt the process of assessment in that college. Because of the various campuses and assessment reporting formats, staying ahead of compliance requirements was another challenge for assessment officials at Frontier U. (Suzie).

Suzie also remarked:

It's a moving target. Hate to say this, but the threat of SACSCOC keeps everyone focused. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee is designed to make assessment more systematic. It discusses assessment reporting, what SACSCOC changes may be coming, and what this means to the institution. It is expected that committee members take this information back to their respective colleges, but this may not always occur so copious documentation in minutes are prepared. All minutes of this committee are documented, and is part of our institutional culture that it is [made] public.

Based on interviews, campus leaders believed that even if changes in SACSCOC requirements were not a threat, it [the institution] would still focus on students, enrollment, and

recruitment. Reflecting about conversations with other institutions and how they view regional accreditation, “They do it because they have to ... they don’t use it to drive things the way that we do” (Suzie).

According to one study participant, “one’s greatest strength is always the greatest weakness” (Karen). The university is well positioned and agile, but a tipping point may be the costs of technology. The need for constant upgrades and patches may become unsustainable, especially for smaller institutions” (Karen). Colleges used various technology platforms to capture student learning evidence, but training to ensure reporting quality and continuity in assessment processes had not been systematic because there are various levels of experience in assessment. Training occurred more locally during an annual fall workshop for new faculty and during monthly Institutional Effectiveness Committee meetings, “but it’s trial and error in some cases” (Suzie). Colleges also differed in their assessment activities and experiences, and bringing all college assessment coordinators “into one room to talk about assessment probably wouldn’t be useful” (Suzie). In the larger picture, to stay ahead of constant changes to accreditation, study participants reflect that conference attendance was important and must continue.

Study participants also mentioned the importance of volunteer participation in SACSCOC accreditation reviews, developing personal networks, and visiting the SACSCOC website regularly to stay current with changes to accreditation. “Federal regulations are growing like mushrooms” and institutions don’t have a choice related to compliance. They will have to be smarter. Throwing money hasn’t made a difference, but rolling up sleeves and building from bottom up” is key (Karen). Karen also noted that some programmatic accreditations are more stringent than regional accreditation, and that in many cases institutions have more experience

and personnel involved in specialized accreditations than with institutional accreditation. Also because programmatic accreditation focuses on the accreditation of a particular program, it is free to develop standards and expectations for that program that reflects its priorities.

Case II: Garden State University

Background

SACSCOC accreditation standards changed dramatically in 2001/2002, and it “took a lot for universities to believe these [SACSCOC] standards were actually true or that they were going to enforce them,” noted one study participant as she reflected on how her institution initially prepared for its upcoming accreditation review (Sandy). Fortunately for Garden State University, in the years leading up to the institution’s Five-year Interim Report in 2009 a small core of faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences (hereafter, “the College”) including two associate deans, the director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, and the Center for Faculty Leadership, began working informally within the college on assessing student learning. Early on they “recognized the importance of assessment, especially of student learning outcomes in the academic units” (Sandy). Realizing that IE would require more resources, they soon sought senior-level support from the provost for a broader institutional assessment effort. This resulted in the drafting of a letter of support for program-level assessment across the university. Study participants noted that the expertise from the College and from professional programs (from the College of Education and College of Business) contributed greatly to the early development of the institution’s assessment infrastructure and culture. Professional programs were also found to be advanced in their assessment activities due to their experiences with various specialized accreditations.

In 2008 an outside consultant was hired to provide foundational training in institutional effectiveness and assessment through a series of campus presentations. In the first round of formal assessment following the consultant's training, all departments were required to develop one student learning outcome. In the following year, departments convened to "flesh that out into a full range of student learning outcomes. We started slowly" (Sandy). The institution eventually realized that the inherent workload of a university-wide assessment initiative was not sustainable with existing resources, and would require additional staff support. A director of academic assessment (interviewee Sandy) was hired in 2008. This person was tasked with establishing how student learning outcomes would be measured, developing a three-year assessment cycle, reviewing records, and offering feedback to programs. At that same time, the institution also hired an individual to manage the assessment of General Education. The hire for this position left the institution within a couple of months of arriving, and the director of academic assessment was again asked to take on additional duties.

In 2009, Garden State U. passed its Five-year Interim Review, but it also received recommendations in IE. One study participant posed that this outcome was because the institution was one of the first accreditation classes to be reviewed using new accreditation standards adopted only a few years earlier. SACSOCOC reviewers reported that the institution suffered from *insufficient longevity* in assessment. Specifically, they reported that three years of assessment evidence was necessary, and that assessment processes appeared to have been inconsistent during the review period.

Capacity Building Activities

Not long after its Fifth-Year Interim Report, Garden State U. started planning for its decennial reaccreditation review, which is a more extensive endeavor because it includes the

review of all forty-one accreditation standards.³⁴ Realizing that this event was going to be a critical undertaking, the provost once again asked the director of assessment to take on this responsibility given her long career in assessment and her experience in assessment at the institution.

The mindset for preparing for the institution's ten-year reaccreditation review in 2012 typically fell into two camps: As Sandy noted, some faculty members saw "value" in assessment because it provided better understanding of their students and programs, while others viewed assessment as "just an exercise." At the institutional level, the goal was "getting everybody on-board" and to "understanding the value of it." At the same time the institution had to also stress making sure everything was completed. Several campus assessment leaders, including a faculty member who from the College who helped develop the Fifth-Year Interim Report³⁵ and who had previously worked with the provost to form a General Education Assessment Committee, spent their time getting academic units "on board." This included making presentations to the faculty senate and having them adopt student learning outcomes for established core competencies (Sandy).

In 2003, a director of assessment was hired to manage assessment activities in Student Affairs. This marked the rebirth of assessment in this division that originated in the 1980s. At that time the role was mostly statistical in nature—counting participation rates and activities. In 2003 when the role was revived after a brief dormancy, it demanded knowledge of student

³⁴ Accreditation review now occurs every five years for SACSCOC-member institutions. Institutional Effectiveness (IE) (program/unit level) includes five standards: 3.3.1.1 academic programs, 3.3.1.2 administrative units, 3.3.1.3 student support services, 3.3.1.4 research, and 3.3.1.5 service. During the Five-year Interim Review, 3.3.1.1 (academic programs) is reviewed. In the decennial reaffirmation of accreditation review, all IE 3.3.1 standards are reviewed.

³⁵ The Fifth-Year Interim Report is submitted mid-point between decennial reaffirmation cycles, and includes a subset of 17 accreditation standards.

developmental theory and statistical methods. A couple of years later in 2007, the institution hired a full-time director of assessment for the College of Education. This was the first time a college received a full-time position to manage various specialized accreditations. The person in this role would also be tasked with managing assessment activities related to IE at the college, department, and program levels.

The Learning Assessment Council was formed in 2008, and was composed of directors of assessment from each college and division from across campus. These directors were typically faculty members who had course release, which meant they worked part-time on assessment in addition to their teaching and research duties. As noted on an institutional website, this committee engaged the campus community to provide assessment resources and to “help foster a culture of assessment throughout the university” (institutional website, 2015). When first created, the Council’s agenda was led by the vice provost who was also in charge of the institution’s accreditation. He offered leadership on assessment by talking about the importance of student learning and of the processes that were involved. The committee eventually developed a standardized assessment reporting format, a scoring rubric for assessment records, and provided communication on IE and assessment issues to campus leaders. Over time the size of the committee got smaller due to other demands on committee members.

The Division of Student Affairs had a full-time director of assessment who reported to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. In this role, he broadly managed assessment in Student Affairs, provided training in assessment, and was involved in division-level planning. Assessment in his division was decentralized and “diffused out to the staff” (William). This division had a long history of assessment at Garden State U., dating back to the 1980s. The first director was appointed by the then-Chancellor who “understood that assessment was kind of the

way the things were going” (William). The director role went dormant for a short period, but was revived again in 2003-2004.

Sustaining Campus IE Initiatives

At the time of the study, assessment was widely accepted as important and necessary, although several study participants reported that the time demands of other duties “could possibly crowd out the continuation of what they have” (Sandy). The constraint of time was accompanied by a concern about the stability of resources (financial and personnel) to support IE activities across the institution. The backdrop for this concern was that the state had reduced higher education budgets during the Great Recession, and salaries had not increased in four years. One study participant noted that the dedication of faculty members and staff, combined with their commitment to students and to their well-being, is how assessment efforts had been sustained at their institution.

Others reflected on the potential loss of seasoned staff members in key roles with experience as SACSCOC committee members and reviewers, and how that might impact their campus assessment activities. At the time of the study, one campus leader had served on an executive committee at SACSCOC. This committee met twice per year, and one of the benefits of service was that members got first-hand knowledge of current accreditation issues and of “changes that were coming” (Sandy). Campus leaders expected him to share this insight with assessment stakeholders, a function considered vital to keeping the institution current on accreditation issues. Campus leaders also considered his SACSCOC experience invaluable during the institution’s recent accreditation review. One participant feared that he might be leaving the university soon, and some worried what impact this might have. “SACS insight may be lost” (Sandy). SACSCOC regularly invited campus leaders to serve on accreditation review

teams. Accreditation reviewers are considered insiders that receive specialized accreditation training from SACSCOC. Reviewers refer to this training and to their professional experiences to evaluate institutions for accreditation compliance. A phenomenon of “raising the bar” occurs when good examples emerge and reviewed by SACS [reviewers]” (Sandy). This phenomenon and formal changes in SACSCOC standards contributed to the perception that the accreditation process is a moving target.

Case III: Bay University

Background

In the two decades leading up to their 2005 decennial reaffirmation of accreditation review in 2005, Bay U. had experienced tremendous institutional and cultural changes. It transitioned from an open access institution to a selective institution with an emphasis on increasing student retention (Vaughn). It had emerged as a research university, and was renamed in the process. It had moved from one athletics conference to the NCAA, and it built new athletic facilities to accommodate larger audiences. It had hosted two presidents whose tenures were defined by aspirational and entrepreneurial pursuits. Evidence-based decision-making had emerged as a primary strategic management framework to inform new institutional priorities of enrollment and retention. The institution’s new footprint included new academic and administrative buildings. Enrollments increased fueled by the state’s population growth, the restructuring of the state’s public institutions, and the institution’s increasing appeal among applicants. Private student housing exploded in neighborhoods adjacent to campus, and service industries sprang up just as quickly. This rapid expansion caught visitors by surprise, but campus leaders were committed to preserving the campus’s architectural legacy while also expanding its

aesthetic appeal. Leaders also ensured that the institution remained student-centered, and that teaching would serve its core mission.

During that same period, there had been notable changes in the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation. “The pre-existing set of 400 ‘Must’ Statements had been reduced to less than 50 Standards” (Alice). It was commonly understood by institutional assessment and accreditation leaders that SACSCOC would be expecting more maturity in IE in terms of an institution’s assessment processes, the quality of assessment evidence, and institutional improvement based on assessment evidence. The QEP, a relatively new educational quality initiative, also emerged as an additional accreditation element. These various developments forced institutions to “reframe” their conceptualization and implementation of IE leading up to their accreditation reviews (Alice).

Capacity Building Activities

When the institution received reaccreditation in 2000, various organizational elements were already in place to support various institutional activities and to comply with accreditation standards. Institutional Research (IR) had been traditionally tasked to support various institutional reporting and accreditation activities including IE. In 2001, a new IR director was hired, and soon after arriving on campus the functions of this role was moved to Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. The director immediately set about learning how the institution was conducting assessment and started preparing for its upcoming Fifth-Year Interim Report in 2005. It didn’t take long to realize that “there was a deficiency” (Alice). Colleges and some departments (education, business, chemistry) that had experience in conducting specialized accreditations were in good shape, but “overall there was not an organized effort” and “we needed help with a lot of units” (Alice). A follow-up review of selected assessment records by

the institution's Strategic Planning Council validated previous findings. This committee led the process through which "the institution sets its vision, defined its mission, and articulated a strategy for achieving goals consistent with the values of the institution" (institutional website, 2015)

"We didn't have a structure" in 2004-2005 (Alice), so the director of IR approached the provost and the president to communicate with campus leaders the need for and importance of participating in assessment and meeting reporting deadlines. Also, because it was felt by many on campus that it was "really important to have an external voice come in and say the importance of it [IE and assessment]" to the university's Administrative Team and SACS Leadership Team (Alice). An external consultant was hired to engage the institution on the broader concept of IE and to provide leadership, training and consultation in building a foundation for the university's initiative. The institution convened a two-day workshop organized led by the outside consultant, and approximately 100 stakeholders from across the institution including vice presidents, academic deans, department chairs and directors and other stakeholders participated in general and breakout sessions by vice president areas. This watershed event led to the adoption of evidence-based decision-making as the primary strategic management framework for campus leadership.

In 2003, Bay U. prepared for its upcoming reaccreditation review, and in 2004 submitted its Five-year Interim Report. In 2005 it received reaccreditation, but also received recommendations in IE (in Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1.1: educational programs, to include student learning outcomes). The then-associate provost and SACSCOC Liaison had spearheaded much of the institution's preparation for the reaccreditation review, and his efforts were guided in part by insights he gained as a SACSCOC committee member and as an institutional liaison

to a state system of higher education-sponsored committee on effectiveness and accreditation. This committee offered opportunities for campus leaders at state institutions to learn from other each other, and it was especially helpful to those struggling with “building support for Institutional Effectiveness” (Alice).

The institution struggled to develop a culture of assessment through many “fits and starts over many, many years” (Francis). “It was a more challenging time ... in 04-05” as IE and the QEP were viewed by many as “something we have to do” and not as something to be “brought into the culture and adopted.” While some units understood the need for assessment and improvement, others “struggled to meet a deadline and to comply. The QEP was new, and many institutions were still finding their way with the QEP process” (Alice). Bay U. incorporated elements from the Nichols Model for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment (Nichols, J. & Nichols, K, 2005), and distributed copies of this book to department chairs, student affairs, and enrollment management (Alice). Campus representatives also attended conferences including the SACSCOC Annual Meeting and the Annual Texas A&M Assessment Conference.

Bay U. also created an Office of Institutional Effectiveness that included a vice president, a director of assessment, three full-time staff, and part-time graduate students. This commitment by the institution to provide the necessary resources to stabilize and sustain this effort was a departure from the reliance on faculty to conduct assessment “program by program, unit by unit” (Vaughn). Faculty had previously provided this support in addition to their regular teaching and research activities, but eventually this assessment model became unsustainable. “IE is [now] providing leadership, and I think that it’s centralized is key” given the complexity of the institution and all its moving parts (Cynthia).

Between reaccreditation cycles, stipends were offered to assessment faculty as a reward for additional effort to complete assessment activities and reporting. Study participants mentioned that while stipends might be used for future summer workshop participation that occurs outside nine-month faculty contracts, the institution was leaning toward changing how it recognizes and rewards assessment involvement. Specifically, it was considering treating assessment involvement as a service element of a faculty member's contract and annual performance review. This reconceptualization of recognition and reward fit with the institution's commitment to teaching quality and service, and was considered more culturally and fiscally sustainable (Francis).

At the time of the study, processes and procedures were still being defined and fine-tuned, "but there is a process" where faculty members are tasked with assessment duties within their areas. "We come together as a University Institutional Effectiveness Review Team" to review and evaluate assessment reports using a rubric that has been created, and feedback is given to the department. While the timing of this review process shifted somewhat over the years, "the fact that we're constantly working on it makes it become part of our routine" (Alice). Another interviewee commented:

What makes it successful here in its current state is that it has become consistent year to year. There is someone saying, 'This is how we want you to do it.' These are the pieces that you'll need to include in your assessment plans. There's ... an extensive rubric, and I also believe that our review team has been helpful across the campus because you essentially are educating people within the division [on] how to review IE and what's good and what's not." (Cynthia)

Bay U. also invested in new assessment software to address the institution's growing needs. The prior technology platform had been chosen based on familiarity of the product by former institutional leaders who had since retired or left the university. One interviewee noted that old technology didn't "reflect the continuous process [of assessment], that it was disjointed, restrictive, and didn't communicate (Evelyn). She added:

You have to have it [technology]. There is no question about that because you need to analyze data, but you also need to provide structure for keeping records of what you've done in terms of progress or annual reporting. It's a necessary tool, definitely, but I don't think technology should be the tail wagging the dog, so to speak.

Sustaining Campus IE Initiatives

Sustaining institutional processes and procedures had been tested during several rounds of institutional reorganization, and when new faculty and staff had been hired that lacked a historical knowledge of "how things got to where they are today" (Vaughn). As faculty and staff were promoted, there was a real possibility that attention to IE would waver due to new priorities or gaps in knowledge of IE and the importance of reaccreditation (Vaughn).

Some of those baseline tasks and responsibilities need to be maintained across the institution, making sure that they're being done effectively, that they remain constant, that they carry over and transfer from whomever is in those leadership positions and understanding the importance of that foundational work. I often wonder if sometimes if that gets forgotten ... when you're moving in and setting priorities and agendas. (Vaughn)

At the program level, new faculty tasked with assessment may lack the formal training or skills necessary to adequately implement and sustain assessment. At the time of the study, assessment training during new faculty orientation had been proposed as one strategy to respond to this challenge, but study participants were not aware if this strategy had been operationalized. “I think that we’re challenged by how well we train consistently and how well we even create a training plan that includes those components” (Vaughn).

Cross-Case Analysis

Introduction

Previously in this chapter, I provided individual cases for Frontier U., Garden State U., and Bay U. In this section I provide an analysis of data across these three cases. First, the capacity building activities that occurred at these institutions are examined. Next, I analyze how these activities and organizational elements interacted. Finally, the concerns expressed by study participants related to sustaining their campus initiatives are discussed.

Prior to the period of capacity building featured in this study, institutions had implemented various organizational structures and activities to support their IE initiatives. However, accreditation reviewers found these initiatives to be non-compliant for various IE standards (see Table 10). This study did not attempt to validate capacity building models from Toma (2010) and NACUBO (2005) or other organizational capacity building frameworks. Rather, it was used as a lens to explore the organizational capacity building that occurred at selected institutions following the receipt of negative accreditation findings.

Table 10

Structures and Activities in Institutional Effectiveness Prior to Organizational Capacity Building

Organizational Structure	Frontier U.	Garden State U.	Bay U.
Assessment staff (approximate FTE)	1	1	1
Other campus support (informal roles)	College Volunteers	limited	none
IE/assessment office location	Student Support Division	Humanities College	Enrollment Management
Purposes of IE, assessment	Accreditation	Accreditation	Accreditation
Culture of IE, assessment	Informal	Informal	Informal
Assessment software	home-grown	none	none

Source: Study participant interviews

Capacity Building Structures and Activities

Responding to recommendations from accreditors, study institutions provided resources to the following organizational elements to build capacity for their campus initiatives. The following list of capacity building structures and activities are organized using an organizational capacity building framework provided by NACUBO (2005) and Toma (2010).³⁶ Table 11 lists the capacity building activities that received the highest priority and resources.

³⁶ Toma's Building Organizational Capacity model (BOC) is a refinement of the model provided by NACUBO, and places *purposes* in the center of the model.

Table 11

*Structures and Activities in Institutional Effectiveness Following Organizational**Capacity Building*

Capacity Building Activity	Institution	Rank
Added staff (infrastructure)	Frontier U.	1
Added new technology (information)	Frontier U.	2
Improved communication using committees	Frontier U.	3
Added, improved processes (processes)	Garden State U.	1
Added staff, delegated duties (infrastructure)	Garden State U.	2
Improved communication using committees	Garden State U.	3
Added staff (infrastructure)	Bay U.	1
Added, improved processes (processes)	Bay U.	2
Culture change (purposes, culture)	Bay U.	3

Source: Study participant interviews

Table 12 lists the organizational elements reported by study participants considered essential to building successful IE initiatives.

Table 12

*Essential Organizational Capacity Building Elements in Institutional Effectiveness Reported**by Study Participants*

Activity, Condition	Institution	Rank
Leadership (champion)	Frontier U.	1
Resources (for new positions)	Frontier U.	2
Technology	Frontier U.	3
Leadership of SACSCOC committee	Garden State U.	1
Collegial support of faculty, staff	Garden State U.	2
SACSCOC board experience	Garden State U.	3
Leadership (champion)	Bay U.	1
Assessment experience	Bay U.	2
Engagement and sharing	Bay U.	3

Source: Study participant interviews

Using a taxonomy proposed by NACUBO (20015) and Toma (2010), this study found that study institutions built organizational capacity for the following organizational structures and activities.

Purposes—why are we here and where are we headed? Study participants reported a lack of consensus on the purposes of IE and assessment initiatives. Faculty culture played a role in how IE and assessment were perceived. Some viewed campus initiatives as activities to meet external accountability requirements, as something that must get accomplished to receive or retain institutional accreditation. Others felt that campus activities aligned with faculty values by focusing on improving institutional quality. Varying perspectives on the purposes and importance of assessment initiatives is not a new phenomenon, and is regularly discussed in the accreditation literature and at professional conferences.

This study also found that institutions communicated purposes in various ways. Some institutions used external consultants to initially introduce assessment to campuses and to jump-start capacity building on those campuses. Activities at other campuses developed organically when faculty and staff initiated assessment activities in their colleges prior to formal adoption of a campus initiative. During the period of capacity building featured in this study, executive leaders championed campus initiatives and provided vision, messaging, and resources.

Structures—how are we configured to do our work? Two of the three study institutions chose to decentralize their structures and some processes by placing new assessment personnel in colleges. Providing addition staff relieved faculty who had taken on assessment duties in addition to their teaching and research responsibilities. When new assessment positions were positioned in colleges, roles were oftentimes filled by existing faculty members. New staff were tasked with providing oversight, coordination, and support for various specialized and

SACSCOC accreditation activities. The assessment structure of the third institution remained centralized and included a director of assessment, one or several assessment associates, and graduate students. Volkwein, Liu, and Woodell (2012) have provided IR ecologies that are useful in understanding the function and roles of IE/assessment offices and how they might be organized (including centralized, decentralized, and fragmented structures).

Policies and processes—how do we get things done? Institutions took steps to further institutionalize their activities by improving policies and processes in assessment planning and reporting. Other activities included regularly reviewing assessment reports for completeness and quality. Improving policies and procedures occurred in the central assessment office, in campus committees, and in colleges when new assessment staff were placed locally. This study found that committee members were tasked with monitoring accreditation changes and communicating information to campus leaders and stakeholders. This new process (monitoring accreditation changes and reporting timelines) built capacity for information gathering and planning by creating a feedback loop between SACSCOC and the institution. Also, remaining current on accreditation changes allowed campus leaders to plan for change in their initiatives.

Information—what do we need to inform our decision making? The need for appropriate assessment information and reliable technology led two institutions to invest in new technologies. The third study institution chose to retain its current planning and reporting system that used Word® templates. These findings suggest broad technology choices that range from home-grown solutions to commercial products. Institutions that have no formal platform must still demonstrate to accreditors that an infrastructure and processes for managing and sharing assessment information (including plans and reports) are available and accessible. Also, it is

common practice for accreditation teams to require multiple years of assessment evidence during accreditation reviews.

Infrastructure—what are our human, physical, technological, and financial assets?

Participants reported that faculty members had taken on assessment duties in addition to their teaching and research responsibilities. They were also concerned that faculty turnover and initiative fatigue might threaten the sustainability of their campus initiatives. Institutional leaders added assessment staff to address these concerns. This finding was intriguing since assessment staffing levels in assessment had not been reported by study participants as a primary contributor to non-compliance in IE. Frontier U. positioned new staff in each of its colleges, while Bay U. assigned four new staff to its IE office. At Garden State U., only one new staff was hired and assigned to General Education assessment. It then assigned other assessment duties to various faculty and staff across the institution.

Questions about optimal assessment support structures and staff levels were posed by study institutions during capacity planning. Details on current assessment and IE office staffing levels and roles at institutions are limited, but Volkwein et al (2012) have provided useful insights on this topic related to the functions and roles of various offices and staff, many of which include IE and assessment responsibilities. For example, they found that IR offices in U.S. postsecondary institutions have an average of three employees, but that staffing ranges can vary tremendously (from one half-time FTE to 22 full-time professionals).

Leadership. Most study participants agreed that leadership was an important quality of successful assessment initiatives. Frontier U. and Bay U. reported that campus leaders served as champions to their campus initiatives who provided support and resources. They reported that these champions had high institutional profiles, and that their leadership made a notable impact

on achieving a healthier culture of assessment and accreditation compliance. Several institutions benefited from campus leaders who had served on SACSOC committees or accreditation teams. These staff provided leadership in various IE and assessment initiatives, and some were assigned accreditation liaison responsibilities which required interpreting standards, and articulating details to campus stakeholders. Garden State U. reported that committees also provided essential leadership for their initiatives.

Communication. Study participants reported that a dynamic relationship existed between leadership and communication. Leadership was mostly described as an asset or input, while communication was characterized as an outcome of good leadership. Messaging served to frame and reiterate the purposes of campus assessment initiatives. Top-down communication was reported as a crucial activity to establishing institutional expectations, while bottom-up communication was mostly used for information sharing and generating support for campus initiatives. Institutions identified the need to improve their communications and information-sharing related to assessment and accreditation. Campus committees were tasked with new responsibilities that included monitoring accreditation changes, review of academic policies and processes, and reviewing assessment plans and reports.

Experience. Study participants reported that experiences in accreditation and assessment were important features of leadership. Specifically, staff who were members of professional networks or who had served on SACSCOC committees or accreditation review teams provided important insight on emerging accreditation topics and evaluator expectations to their campuses. Experienced campus leaders also provided expertise based on their prior experiences in student affairs assessment and specialized accreditation activities. Participants from Garden State U. recounted a legacy of assessment in their student affairs division that dated back to the 1980s.

They also reported that a small core of faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences had provided early leadership on assessing student learning within their college, and that this work provided a template for the institution's current initiatives. Study participants also found that colleges with programmatic accreditation were better prepared for other forms of accreditation.

Culture—what is the institution's essential character? Study participants agreed that their campus IE and assessment cultures had improved through capacity building. Change was attributed to strong leaders who provided vision, strategic guidance, increased symbolism of the importance of campus initiatives, and improved communication to campus stakeholder. Campus officials also reported that more needed to be done to further enhance their cultures related to assessment.

Sustaining Campus Initiatives

Study participants reported that faculty often viewed the purposes of assessment differently. Some viewed assessment as a tool to achieve and sustain institutional quality, and others considered it an external accreditation requirement. Executive leaders and staff with professional networks and accreditation evaluator experience provided crucial expertise to campus initiatives. Institutions added additional assessment staff to the central assessment office and to colleges. These staff provided additional administrative support to faculty. Campus committees also emerged as important capacity building actors by improving information sharing and by providing administrative coordination and support to various assessment activities. New technologies were also adopted by leaders at two institutions to improve the management and reporting of assessment information.

Although study participants reported confidence in their current assessment initiatives, they also expressed concerns about sustaining their campus initiatives. Assessment was viewed

by some faculty members as an internal activity that aligned with institutional values, and by others as an external requirement of achieving or retaining institutional accreditation. This lack of consensus often created confusion and tension between faculty members and campus leaders who were charged with accreditation compliance. The challenge became how to align faculty activities with the institution's values, and to also comply with external accreditation demands. Alignment with institutional values was perceived to contribute to the sustainability of campus initiatives. The campus leaders charged with ensuring compliance were challenged to provide guidance and balance between these varying perceptions of purposes.

Assessment activities were also reported to place additional demands on faculty members. These extra duties were sometimes adopted voluntarily, while in other cases it was added to existing teaching and research responsibilities. In either scenario, retaining or expanding faculty commitment was perceived as challenging. One response in early capacity building was to provide financial rewards to faculty for extra duties, but this was eventually perceived as unsustainable. As a solution, one institution contemplated shifting its reward structure away from financial incentives to a service recognition option. In this model, faculty could meet their annual service requirement by participating in assessment activities. This study found that institutions built additional infrastructure capacity by adding additional staff to the central assessment office and to colleges, and that each institution adopted a slightly different arrangement.

Employee turnover also threatened to undermine assessment quality in terms of the inherent loss of institutional knowledge and experience. The study found that institutions offered leadership development programs for faculty and staff to fill important positions that were expected to be vacated through retirement and job relocations. Inconsistent state funding was

also perceived to threaten campus resources dedicated to assessment initiatives. The study found that faculty and staff salaries had been frozen for years, and that future state funding of higher education was unclear.

Finally, study participants were concerned about changes in accreditation guidelines and reviewer expectations. Several study participants perceived that accreditation was a moving target that created uncertainty. They were also certain that accreditation changes were likely to impact their current initiatives. Institutions decide to engage the accreditation process more proactively by sending campus leaders to annual accreditation conference. They also began using committees to monitor accreditation changes and requirements, and to increase communication to campus stakeholders on campus assessment activities and important deadlines.

Table 13

Perceived Threats to Sustaining Institutional Effectiveness Initiatives Reported by Study Participants

Condition
Sustaining momentum (continuity)
Decline in funding, support for existing infrastructure
Leadership turnover (retirement, new roles, new hires)
Organizational change (reorganization)
Continuity in programs, services (need for consistent training)
Time constraints (faculty, staff availability, workload, morale)
Reward structure, incentives for faculty
Inconsistent collection and reporting of assessment evidence
Assessment information can become convoluted, weaker throughout institution
Changes in reaccreditation standards, expectations

Source: Study participant interviews

Summary of Findings

The analysis of interview data on capacity building that occurred at the three public institutions developed several findings that can be organized around the study's research questions.

1. Accreditation data used in this study (SACSCOC 2015, 2014, 2013) did not provide sufficient detail on accreditation compliance in IE by institutional type, size and/or control. However, accreditation data from 2009-2010 showed that institutions with low-enrollment and HBCUs received a higher number of recommendations on average than other institutional types (see Appendices A-B). In another study, Malone (2003) also found that accreditation recommendations were evenly distributed among SACSCOC institutions.
2. Accreditation can be a primary driver for change initiatives in higher education institutions. Recent accreditation data showed that many institutions failed to achieve compliance in various campus initiatives tied to accreditation requirements, despite efforts implemented for accreditation. This study found that institutions built capacity for their campus assessment initiatives by enhancing infrastructure (adding new staff), improving processes and procedures, and adopting new assessment technologies. Activities within these areas included using committees to enhance the coordination and reporting of assessment and for monitoring accreditation requirements and changes.
3. Findings from this study suggest that capacity building is not a linear process. Institutions in this study were similar in terms of institutional type, mission, and other institutional characteristics, but they made different design and resource choices during capacity

building. These choices are influenced by institutional leadership, institutional contexts, and campus priorities.

4. Toma (2010) reported that *purpose* provides direction for where an organization is headed and why. Other authors refer to this concept as strategy. This study found that faculty viewed IE and assessment differently, either as a strategy to pursue institutional quality or as a compliance activity related to accreditation. Interviewees also reported that this lack of consensus could threaten the sustainability of current campus initiatives.
5. Leaders can serve as enablers for capacity building. Study participants described executive leaders as champions who provided vision and resources for strategies related to capacity building. Leaders also delegated implementation responsibilities to middle-level managers who provided important operational guidance to campus assessment liaisons and coordinators. Campus leaders with SACSCOC committee or accreditation reviewer experience were especially valuable to planning and implementing successful campus initiatives due to their unique training and skills, and their knowledge of accreditation requirements and changes.
6. Institutions invested in new assessment technologies. Technology choices were guided by best practices in assessment that institutions provide robust assessment information during accreditation reviews. Technologies improved campus assessment planning, reporting, and analysis by providing a stable, current platform. Campus leaders also used information in institutional decision-making, guided in part by the dictum that what gets measured gets improved.³⁷

³⁷ The author of this quote is unknown, although many suggest that similar quotes are linked to Peter Drucker's quote, "What's measured improves."

7. Assessment in two institutions became more decentralized. To build capacity in IE and assessment, additional staff were placed within colleges. This helped to reduce the workloads for faculty who had taken on assessment activities in addition to their teaching and research responsibilities. This design change also provided local opportunities for assessment training and support to faculty. Deans in these colleges were also tasked with reviewing annual assessment reports in their areas, and institutional committees began providing assessment coordination and support.
8. Committees took on new duties including reviewing campus assessment activities, monitoring accreditation requirements and changes, and communicating changes to campus leaders. In many cases these committees also reviewed assessment records and provided feedback to campus assessment coordinators.
9. Institutions provided staff development opportunities to faculty and staff because campus leaders feared that employee turnover could lead to the loss of important institutional knowledge. Institutions also sent campus leaders to annual conferences to learn about accreditation and assessment issues and to develop peer networks.
10. Campus leaders were concerned about sustaining their campus assessment activities. Internal conditions included faculty work overload, assessment fatigue, and the lack of reward structures. Concerns were related to how these might impact future faculty engagement in important assessment activities.
11. Changes in accreditation standards and increasing reviewer expectations were expected to present continued challenges to institutions. Study participants noted that recent accreditation reviews that resulted in non-compliance provided context for their concerns.

12. Unstable state funding to institutions could threaten the sustainability of various campus initiatives. Even SACSCOC appears concerned about the impact that reductions in state budgets may have on vital programs and services.³⁸ At the time of the study, higher education funding had been frozen or reduced due to the economic decline of the Great Recession. Although the level of state funding was expected to rebound somewhat, uncertainty about how much support would be available related to quality and affordability has persisted, and some institutions have reduced staff levels and eliminated programs.³⁹

³⁸ Impact of Budget Reductions on Higher Education-A Position Statement (SACSCOC) March, 2002

³⁹ <http://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/funding-down-tuition-up>

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study sought to learn how leaders in higher education institutions built organizational capacity for their campus initiatives related to accreditation. Capacity building in higher education institutions has not been well understood by campus leaders and practitioners, or broadly explored in the higher education literature. This study was rooted in the assessment and accreditation literatures, and was guided by capacity building frameworks for higher education institutions proposed by NACUBO (2005) and Toma (2010). The multiple-case study compared three public institutions and capacity building for their assessment initiatives. It explored what organizational elements were involved, how these elements interacted, and if current initiatives were sustainable.

Several factors contributed to the selection of this research topic. First, the accreditation review process for higher education institutions serves as a powerful driver of change initiatives. Recent accreditation attention has been directed to assessing institutional effectiveness (IE) in terms of how well it achieves its mission and goals. However, accreditation data show that many institutions fail to demonstrate compliance in this accreditation standard. Second, accountability and other drivers are likely to lead to future initiatives at institutions, so it will be important for campus leaders to familiarize themselves with the strategies, tools, and techniques to successfully plan, implement, and sustain these initiatives.

Data from interviews with campus leaders from three public institutions are featured in case studies provided in Chapter 4. These cases detail the historical contexts of institutions, the

capacity building activities that occurred in IE, how organizational elements interacted, and perceived threats to sustaining these initiatives. Chapter 4 also provides additional analysis of these cases by looking for commonalities and differences between cases. This chapter reports key findings that emerged from that analysis, and offers implications for further research and for practitioners.

Key Findings

Does accreditation compliance in Institutional Effectiveness vary by institutional type, size and/or control? If so, how? Accreditation data used in this study were aggregated, and did not include detail on institutional type, size and/or control (SACSCOC 2015, 2014, 2013, 2010, 2009). Data from 2009-2010 showed that a higher percentage of low-enrollment institutions and HBCUs were non-compliant in IE compared to other institutions (Johnson, 2011). Malone (2003) found that recommendations resulting from non-compliance in IE were evenly distributed among SACSCOC institutions. This study targeted baccalaureate-granting institutions which constituted the second largest grouping of SACSCOC institutions. Accreditation data showed that a high proportion of these institutions failed to demonstrate compliance in IE (SACSCOC 2010, 2009). These institutions often posted their accreditation results on institution websites, which provided early insights on the phenomenon of accreditation non-compliance in postsecondary institutions.

Are leaders in higher education institutions using organizational capacity building to support their campus initiatives related to accreditation? If so, how is this being accomplished, and how do elements interact? This study found that institutions added assessment staff, improved processes and procedures related to assessment planning and reporting, and implemented new assessment technologies. Executive leaders were important enablers of

capacity building by proposing a vision for initiatives and communicating how the campus would move forward. They also provided important resources to enact various capacity building structures and activities. Campus leaders with experience in SACSCOC committee work and accreditation reviews provided important perspectives on the accreditation process and standards. Campus committees were reconstituted or new ones were created, and included executive staff members, middle managers, and assessment coordinators. Committees were charged with monitoring accreditation standards and changes, reviewing assessment records, and communicating a variety of accreditation and assessment information to campus stakeholders. Finally, the positioning of new assessment staff outside the central assessment office and the expansion of committee work to monitor and coordinate assessment activities suggested that IE initiatives had become less centralized.

Are these initiatives sustainable, and if so, how is this being accomplished? Study participants were concerned about the sustaining campus IE initiatives. Internal conditions thought to threaten sustainability included lack of consensus on the purposes of assessment, declining interest in assessment, potential loss of experienced faculty, and lack of adequate rewards or incentives. External conditions included unstable state funding to postsecondary institutions and its potential impact on campus initiatives, and changing accreditation standards. Institutions used capacity building to further institutionalize their campus initiatives, but deinstitutionalization of accreditation initiatives can also occur under certain circumstances. Deinstitutionalization themes with some relevance to this study included increasing accountability demands, increasing technical specificity, expectations of assessment maturity, and increasing competition for resources.

Research Implications

This study contributes to the under-developed literature base regarding how institutions build organizational capacity for their initiatives related to accreditation. A variety of research themes and considerations emerged from this research, and are presented below.

Research in organizational capacity building should be expanded to include other types of postsecondary institutions. This was a study of three public institutions with large or very large enrollments, but some accreditation data showed that a higher percentage of low-enrollment institutions and HBCUs were non-compliant in IE compared to other institutions. A study conducted by NILOA (Cooper & Terrell, 2013) determined that institutions on average spent approximately \$160,000 per year on their assessment activities, including approximately \$108,000 per year on salaries. It also found that as institutional enrollment decreased, the average amount spent per student increased. These findings suggest that low-enrollment institutions may be disproportionately impacted by high assessment costs.

Institutions in this study built capacity for their assessment initiatives by hiring new staff and purchasing additional software. NILOA (2013) has reported that salaries account for a large proportion of assessment budgets. Technology purchases and services are other large expenditures in assessment budgets, and improvements such as greater capacity for data collection and reporting are expected to further increase budgets. Swing and Coogan (2010) proposed that assessment budgeting should include both direct and indirect costs, but that the benefits of assessment to an institution should also be included during cost-benefit considerations. Assessment budgets are likely to increase as accountability demands require institutions to add additional assessment staff, implement new incentive programs, and improve technology. Additional research is needed to learn what investments are being made by

institutions based on characteristics such as size, type, and control, and if institution assessment budgets account for variations in accreditation non-compliance.

Is IE becoming more decentralized in postsecondary institutions? Webber and Calderon (2015) have reported that the composition, governance structure, and funding arrangements of postsecondary institutions can influence the typology of campus offices. Hearn (1988) has also noted that “tasks, staff, structures, environments, and technologies vary widely across and even within organizations, so approaches that work in one context might well not work in another” (p. 639). This study found that institutions built capacity for their initiatives by adding new assessment staff, and that in two institutions new staff were placed outside the central assessment office. Institutional committees were also tasked with assessment monitoring, coordination, and reporting. These organizational design choices implied that an organizational ecology of multiple assessment locations and features had emerged on these campuses. Based on insights provided by interviewees, the need for greater decentralization was driven by increasing demands that outpaced the capacity of the central assessment office in terms of assessment needs in colleges. Hearn and Corcoran (1988) have reported that the phenomenon of *limited attention* can emerge in organizations if “central-office research time and resources are not available to meet the needs perceived to be significant on campus” (p. 635). This study found that many faculty had added assessment duties to their regular teaching and research responsibilities.

Institutional leaders may also have intentionally chosen to decentralize decision-making to increase faculty engagement and oversight by the colleges. Placing new assessment staff in the colleges produced various benefits. It relieved faculty who had taken on assessment responsibilities in addition to their teaching and research duties. It also made assessment training and consultation services more accessible and responsive to local needs. Decentralization may

also reduce feelings of alienation by faculty by placing them closer to decision-making within their colleges. These choices honor the professional values of faculty because they promise more autonomy in decision-making in academic affairs. Ironically, decentralization may lead to more work in terms of the increased demands on faculty time to evaluate college assessment planning and reporting. In the long-run, colleges must confront accreditation and other environmental changes, and design new structures and activities to improve program quality.

Questions about if and how decentralization can be managed needs to be further explored as well. Organizational contingency theory posits that “the directions, extent, and timing of changes will depend strongly upon the specific characteristics of the institution, as well as upon the broader economic, social, and demographic factors” (Hearn & Corcoran, 1988, p. 639). The potential dangers of decentralization should also be considered and managed. These can include duplication of functions, loss of campus-wide mission and control, and disruptive competition (Schmidlein, 1985). Hearn and Corcoran (1988) have also suggested that “that dispersion of sources and controllers of information throughout the institution may provide an impetus for improved organizational efficiency and effectiveness” (p. 648).

Insights on planned change in IE are needed. This study explored capacity building during a period of institutional turbulence following a negative accreditation review. External features such as accreditation can provide pressure for organizational conformity, and can serve to sustain and perpetuate adherence to legitimated organizational activities (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In this study, organizational capacity building was used as a strategy to maintain the interaction between the external environment and the institution. Campus leaders who received citations or recommendations are likely to be more motivated to invest in additional personnel, technical data collection/reporting strategies, and improving processes and procedures because

they know that significant changes must be made in a short period. Perhaps the efforts described in this study were easier to implement because most members of the campus community knew of the high stakes involved and the need to make substantial change.

In contrast to unplanned change such as the introduction of a new accreditation requirement, the planned-changed literature focuses on the internal environment as the force or source of change (Kezar, 2001). Typically, change is often the result of new leadership and change agents (Carnell, 1995). Further research is needed on planned change in campus initiatives that occur during periods of relative stability. What are the sources of change for these initiatives, and what activities are involved? What are the outcomes of these initiatives, and do they differ from the outcomes of unplanned ones? If so, how?

What techniques are used by institutions to reward and incentivize faculty for their work in assessment? This study showed that many faculty had assumed assessment duties in addition to their teaching and research responsibilities, and that university employees had not received salary increases for several years. Rewards and incentives are techniques used by employers for motivating and encouraging better performance in the workplace. Many studies show that faculty are not generally motivated by external rewards (Bess, 1996), and that they may be willing to trade higher rewards for the opportunity to work within an atmosphere of autonomy and collegiality (Corson, 1979). Galbraith (2015) has suggested that reward systems align employee goals with organizational goals. Thus, an institutional incentive and reward systems should be reviewed to ensure integration and alignment with new organizational structures and values. Several institutions had provided financial incentives to faculty for additional assessment participation and duties, but this approach was ultimately deemed unsustainable. One institution reported that it was considering moving away from financial rewards and toward service-based

recognition. It proposed that faculty members could apply committee assignments or assessment work toward the service component of their employment contract. Webber (2011) has reported that committee assignments are a common form of campus service used to calculate faculty productivity. Additional research is needed in this area to learn of strategies being used by institutions to recognize, motivate, and reward faculty members who are tasked with assessment responsibilities.

Implications for Practitioners

Increasing consensus and buy-in are important. These sentiments were captured in the 2013 National Provost Survey (NILOA), and are regularly themes featured at accreditation and assessment conferences. Some see the purpose of assessment as improvement or as accountability (Banta, 2002; Ewell, 2009). Faculty perspectives are very likely influenced by professional values concerning autonomy and academic freedom. As proposed by Birnbaum (1991), faculty assert their traditional roles in an institution's academic affairs, and do not welcome outside interference in their activities. For faculty, improvement is viewed as an activity that aligns with personal and institutional values on academic quality. When portrayed as accountability, faculty view assessment as a compliance activity imposed by external actors and an intrusion on their work. Etzioni (1961) defined compliance as "a relationship consisting of the power employed by superiors to control subordinates and the orientation of the subordinates to this power" (p. xv). Faculty express skepticism over the ability to assess student learning, they fear the misuse of assessment results and data, and some are concerned that assessment is a fad (Cain & Hutchings, 2013). We are in an era characterized by a growing list of accountability stakeholders and standards, and more frequent accreditation review cycles. Campus leaders must look to ways to balance external accountability demands while also preserving faculty values of

autonomy and oversight of academic affairs. They must also look to increase faculty engagement (Cain & Hutchings, 2013) and “build faculty ownership” (Banta, 2002, p. 58), elements considered essential in successful assessment programs. Bok (2013) suggested finding ways to appeal to faculty values to increase faculty engagement. Cain and Hutchings (2013) provided suggestions on increasing buy-in including reframing assessment as an improvement initiative and not an external mandate; meet faculty where they are; provide resources / developmental opportunities to support faculty and staff assessment efforts; cultivate leadership and stability; and involve students in assessment discussions to improve learning strategies.

Assessment may not have been fully adopted or institutionalized. This phenomenon might also explain why some view the purposes of assessment and IE differently. Rogers (2003) has suggested that the adoption of an innovation can fail if there is insufficient time between the diffusion phases of awareness to adoption, or from a personal choice not to adopt assessment. This phenomenon can also result from an interruption in diffusion phases (phases are sequential). Lack of unanimity might also be explained by a failure to institutionalize IE during its *mobilization* phase when institutions should have been prepared for change (when IE and assessment were introduced). Capacity building can be used as a planning tool during this phase, as well as during the phases of *implementation* and *institutionalization*. It is beneficial for campus leaders to familiarize themselves with the “why, what, and how of change” (Kezar, 2001, p. 11), as well as the various typologies of change models.

Institutional leaders in this study used organizational capacity building to further institutionalize their campus initiatives. Selznick (1957) has defined institutionalized behaviors and activities as “stable, repetitive and enduring activities” (as cited in Oliver, 1992, p. 563), and are “maintained over long periods of time without further justification or elaboration and are

“highly resistant to change” (Zucker, 1987, p. 446). However, under certain circumstances, deinstitutionalization can occur. Study participants reported various organizational and environmental conditions that could threaten the sustainability of their campus initiatives. Oliver (1992) proposed that political, functional, and social mechanisms are *pressures* for deinstitutionalization, and that entropy and inertial pressures moderate the rate of deinstitutionalization. Readers may find this framework can be useful to better understanding the role of sustainability conditions in predicting or determining deinstitutionalization of campus initiatives. Political pressures at the organizational level include mounting performance crisis (increasing accountability demands). Functional pressures at the organization and environmental levels include increasing technical specificity (assessment maturity) and increasing competition for resources (reduced state funding), respectively.

Institutions should fully engage the accreditation review process. Accreditation is a mechanism designed to assure and improve academic quality, and it is an opportunity for organizational learning. The self-study is a review of standards of the accrediting organization that an institution undertakes (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2016). As the accreditation review process moves to off-site and on-site reviews, reviewers provide feedback that should be perceived as “sound judgement from respected members of the academic community that helps to move an institution forward” (p. 4). In many cases, though, feedback is perceived as punitive. Some study participants reported being surprised or feeling caught off guard by negative accreditation review findings. For one institution, the lack of consensus among site reviewers may have partly contributed to a negative review, but this outcome was likely an outlier.

Accreditation processes can change as best practices emerge. Commonly-reported concerns from study participants included how accreditation is a moving target because accreditation guidelines and rules change regularly. They also find the way reviewers conduct their work remains a mystery. The accreditation process is not static, and changes do occur. However, changes are typically incremental ones. Accreditation change can result from various internal and external drivers. This was the case in the early 1990s when SACSCOC responded to increased accountability pressures related to the quality of student learning. Another indication of changes in the regional accreditation process is indicated by the number of revisions editions. For example, SACSCOC has implemented five major revisions to its accreditation standards since its adoption in 1984.⁴⁰

It is also critical for campus leaders to understand that their assessment initiatives are expected to demonstrate increasing maturity. Taylor (2015) has stated that organizational objectives are more likely to be achieved as a process increases in maturity. Campus leaders should also know that accreditation evaluators bring their own sets of professional standards and experiences to their work. However, as evaluators encounter mature practices at institutions, new information is added to their evaluation schema. Institutions need to become more aware of this phenomenon, but they should also view the accreditation review process, changes in accreditation standards, and perhaps even non-compliance as valuable organizational learning opportunities.

Open systems can increase engagement with the environment. Accreditation associations regularly post information on accreditation changes to their websites, and it is incumbent on campus leaders to remain current on these changes. Institution leaders in this study increased

⁴⁰ SACSCOC Accrediting Standards, Principles of Accreditation (see <http://www.sacscoc.org/principles.asp>)

their awareness of accreditation changes by regularly monitoring the SACSCOC website. Another information feedback loop was enacted as campus leaders began attending annual accreditation association meetings to learn more about accreditation and best practices at other institutions. These meetings also provided opportunities for campus leaders to establish professional networks with peer institutions, consultants with specialized skills or experiences, and vendors. The information provided at conferences and through professional networks may also aid in further demystify the accreditation process.

Becoming more agile and adaptive can help institutions manage continuous change.

Increasing accountability demands are likely to lead to more change initiatives. Accreditation standards can change or new ones may be introduced. State support to institutions is unstable; campus leaders in key roles may move on to other opportunities; assessment stakeholders may lose interest; and technologies can change. Background research on study institutions found that campus IE initiatives existed prior to accreditation review, yet these were insufficient to demonstrate compliance. According to some participants, this outcome was due to the introduction of new accreditation standards and the lack of sufficient time to respond to changes. Others didn't anticipate that accreditors would evaluate their initiatives based on new standards. Agility requires stability and the capacity to move quickly.⁴¹ Postsecondary institutions can use capacity building to plan, implement and sustain various campus initiatives, but they should also borrow other strategies and tools to adequately respond to and manage various forms of change.

The loss of personnel may severely threaten the stability of an established initiative.

Participants in this study expressed concern about the loss of experienced faculty and staff, and how this might impact their IE initiatives. Employee turnover is a feature of modern workplaces,

⁴¹ McKinsey & Company (2016): <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/the-keys-to-organizational-agility>

but personnel changes can be especially detrimental if it occurs suddenly or if transition training or a succession plan are not in place. Faculty and staff may pursue new jobs or retire, but study participants reported that faculty also face burn-out because of additional assessment responsibilities. *Initiative fatigue* is a real threat as campus leaders and staff feel overwhelmed by the increasing number of campus initiatives (Kuh & Hutchins, 2015). Human capital is a critical capacity element, and so institutional leaders must seek strategies to target quality hires, develop existing staff, provide adequate rewards / incentives, plan for transition, and ensure continuity.

Conclusion

This study provides insights on capacity building activities in higher education institutions. This research is timely since accreditation data show that many institutions are non-compliant in various accreditation initiatives, including those that assess an institution's effectiveness. Non-compliance can result from insufficient capacity in one or more organizational elements that provide the administrative foundation for an initiative. Institution officials who seek compliance for their initiatives can learn from institutions with successful initiatives, from examples presented at annual conferences, and from case studies in the higher education and accreditation literatures.

This study provides direction for future research in higher education institutions including how other types of institutions use organizational capacity building in their campus initiatives. Additional themes for exploration include decentralization in institutional assessment, best practices in rewarding and incentivizing faculty for assessment work, and organizational designs that are adaptive to continuous environmental change. Accountability pressures are expected to drive future change initiatives at institutions, so it will be important for campus

leaders to equip themselves with the appropriate knowledge, tools, and techniques to successfully respond to and manage these challenges.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, F. K. (2000). The changing face of accountability: monitoring and assessing institutional performance in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, (71)4, 411-431. Published by Ohio State University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2649146>
- Alexander, L. (2015). Higher education accreditation: Concepts and proposals. A White Paper to the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. Washington.
- Alfred, R. L. (2006). *Managing the big picture in colleges and universities: From tactics to strategy*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Altbach, P., Berdahl, R. & Gumport, P. (Eds.) (2005). *American higher education in the twenty-first century: social, political, and economic challenges*. (Second Edition). Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press.
- American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (Sixth Edition). Washington, DC.
- Ansoff, H. I., Declerck, R. P., & Hayes, R. L. (1976). *From strategic planning to strategic management*. London: Wiley.
- Association of American Colleges & Universities (1985). *Integrity in the college curriculum*.
- Baird, C. (2013). The fifth-year interim review process and included standards. Retrieved from http://www.sacscoc.org/staff/cbaire/Fifth_Year_Interim_Review.pdf
- Banta, T. W. and Associates (2002). *Building a scholarship of assessment*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/John Wiley & Sons.
- Banta, T. W. (1986). Comprehensive program evaluation at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville: A response to changes in state funding policy. In T. W. Banta (Ed.), *Performance funding in higher education: A critical analysis of Tennessee's experience* (pp. 37-50). Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.
- Bardo, J. W. (2009). The impact of the changing climate for accreditation on the individual college or university: Five trends and their implications. *New Directions for Higher Education*, (145), 47.
- Bastedo, M. N. (2011). Is higher education more like a business? No, business is more like higher education. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-bastedo-phd/is-higher-education-more-_b_921036.html

- Bennett, W. J. (1984). *To reclaim a legacy: A report on the humanities in higher education*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Humanities.
- Bess, J. L. (1996). *Teaching well and liking it: Motivating faculty to teach effectively*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Birnbaum, R. (1991). *How colleges work. The cybernetics of academic organization and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Birnbaum, R. (2001). *Management fads in higher education. Where they come from, what they do, why they fail*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bogue, E. G. & Hall, K. B. (2010, December). *Corporate, political, and academic perspectives on higher education accountability policy: A research analysis*. Presentation at the SACSCOC 2010 Annual Meeting. Louisville, KY.
- Bolser, K. (2016). Retrieved from <http://thejarednicholsgroup.com/free-resources/guest-articles/the-role-of-organizational-design-in-21st-century-organizations-the-future-of-higher-education/>
- Brittingham, B. (2015). Regional accreditors announce common framework for defining and approving competency-based education programs. Retrieved from download.hlcommission.org/C-RAC_CBE_Statement_6_2_2015.pdf
- Cain, T. & Hutchings, P. (2013, October). *Faculty buy-in and engagement: Reframing the conversation around faculty roles in assessment*. Presentation at the Assessment Institute, Indianapolis, IN.
- Cameron, K. (1978). Measuring organizational effectiveness in institutions of higher education. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23(4), 604-632.
- Cameron, K. (1983). Strategic responses to conditions of decline. Higher education and the private sector. *Journal of Higher Education*, 54(4), 360-379.
- Cameron, K. (1984). Organizational adaptation and higher education. *Journal of Higher Education*, 55(6), 122-144.
- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Basic classification methodology. Retrieved from <http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/methodology/basic.php>
- Chaffee, E. E. (1985). The concept of strategy: From business to higher education. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research*, (1): 133-171. New York: Agathon Press.
- Charan, R. & Colvin, G. (1999, June). Why CEOs fail. *Fortune*.

- Cooper, T. & Terrell, T. (2013, August). What are institutions spending on assessment? Is it worth the cost? (Occasional Paper No.18). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Corson, J. J. (1979). Management of the college or university: It's different! Topical Paper No. 16. Tucson: Center for the Study of Higher Education, University of Arizona. (ED 177 976)
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd Edition). Washington, DC: SAGE Publications.
- DiMaggio, P. J. & Powell, W. W. (1983, April). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2): 147-160.
- DiSalvio, P. (2012). University of Massachusetts Boston: Reconstituting a continuing education division to a degree-granting unit. *Continuing Higher Education Review*, 46: 141-150.
- Eaton, J. S. (2016). A board member's guide to accreditation: The basics, the issues, the challenges. Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Retrieved from <http://www.chea.org/pdf/board-guide-accreditation.pdf#search=%22self-study%22>
- Eaton, J. S (2012). The future of accreditation. *Planning for Higher Education*, 40(3).
- Etzioni, A. A. (1961). *Comparative analysis of complex organizations: On power, involvement, and their correlates* (2nd ed.). New York Free Press.
- Ewell, P. T. (1994). A matter of integrity: Accountability and the future of self-regulation. *Change*, (26): 24-29.
- Ewell, P. T. (2008). No correlation: musings on some myths about quality. *Change*, (November-December). Retrieved from <http://www.changemag.org/Archives/Back%20Issues/November-December%202008/full-no-correlation.html>
- Ewell, P. T. (2009). Assessment, accountability, and improvement: Revisiting the tension (NILOA Occasional Paper No.1). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Ewell, P. T. (2014). The feds are back: Reauthorization and college ratings. *Assessment Update*, November-December 26(6), 9-10.
- Ewell, P. T. (2015a). Transforming institutional accreditation in U.S. higher education. National Center for Higher Education Management Systems: Boulder.
- Ewell, P. T. (2015b). Comments on higher education accreditation: Concepts and proposals. National Center for Higher Education Management Systems: Boulder.

- Ewell, P., Jankowski, N., & Provezis, S. (2010). Connecting state policies on assessment with institutional assessment activity. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).
- Gaither, G. H. (1995). Assessing performance in an age of accountability: Case studies. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 91(Fall).
- Galbraith, J. (2015). Implementing your business model with the Galbraith Star Model. Retrieved from <http://blog.strategyzer.com/posts/2015/2/03/implementing-your-business-model-with-the-galbraith-star-model>
- Galbraith, J. (2005). *Designing organizations: An executive briefing on strategy, structure, and process*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Galbraith, J. R., & Kazanjian, R. K. (1986). *Strategy implementation: structure, systems and process*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company.
- Gillen, A., Bennett, D. L., & Vedder, R. (2010). *The inmates running the asylum? An analysis of higher education accreditation*. Washington, DC: Center for College Affordability and Productivity. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536283.pdf>
- Goold, M. & Campbell, A. (2002). Do you have a well-designed organization? Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2002/03/do-you-have-a-well-designed-organization>.
- Hayes, D. P., Wolfer, L. T., & Wolfe, M. F. (1996). Schoolbook simplification and its relation to the decline in SAT-verbal scores. *American Educational Research Journal*, Summer 33(2): 489-508.
- Hearn, J. C., & Heydinger, R. B. (1985). Scanning the university's external environment: objectives, constraints, and possibilities. *Journal of Higher Education*, 56(4).
- Hearn, J. C. & Corcoran, M. E. (1988). An exploration of factors behind the proliferation of the institutional research enterprise. *Journal of Higher Education*, 59(6). DOI: 10.2307/1982231
- Hossler, D. (2000). The problem with college ranks. *About Campus*, 5(1): 20-24.
- Hossler, D., & Foley, E. M. (1995, Winter). Reducing the noise in the college choice process: The use of college guidebooks and ratings. In Walleri, R. D. and Moss, M. K. (eds.), *Evaluating and Responding to College Guidebooks and Rankings*, *New Directions for Institutional Research Series No. 88*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco: 21-30.
- Hutchings, P., Ewell, P. & Banta, T. (2012). AAHE principles of good practice: Aging nicely. Retrieved from <http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/PrinciplesofAssessment.html#AAHE>

- Hutcheson, P. (2007). The Truman Commission's vision of the future. *Thought and Action*. (Fall): 107-115.
- Johnson, M. (2011, April). Presentation at the Small College Initiative, Atlanta, GA. Retrieved from <http://www.sacscoc.org/staff/mjohnson/SCI-effective%20IE%20and%20Quality%20Improvement-MSJ.pdf>
- Keller, G. (1983). *Academic strategy. The management revolution in American higher education*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press.
- Kezar, A. J. (2001). Understanding and facilitating organizational change in the 21st century: Recent research and conceptualizations. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 28(4). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Knapp, J. (2009a). *The business of higher Education (2): Management and fiscal strategies*. Westport, CT: Praeger Perspectives.
- Knapp, J. (2009b). University leadership in an era of hyperaccountability. *The Business of Higher Education (3)*. Westport, CT: Praeger Perspectives.
- Kuh, G. D. & Hutchins, P. (2015) Addressing assessment fatigue by keeping the focus on learning. Urbana: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Kuh, G. D.; Ikenberry, S. O.; Jankowski, N. A.; Cain, T. R.; Ewell, P. T.; Hutchings, P., & Kinzie, J. (2015). Using Evidence of Student Learning to Improve Higher Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G. D., Jankowski, N., Ikenberry, S. O., & Kinzie, J. (2014). Knowing what students know and can do: The current state of student learning outcomes assessment in US colleges and universities. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).
- Jonas, P. M. & Popovics, A. J. (2000). Beyond the enrollment management division: The enrollment management organization. *College and University*: 76(2): 3-8. A Journal of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.
- Law and Higher Education (2010). Higher Education act. Retrieved from <http://lawhighereducation.org/75-higher-education-act-hea.html>
- Lawrence, T. B., Dyck, B., Maitlis, S., & Mauws, M. K. (2006, summer). The underlying structure of continuous change. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 47(4). Retrieved from <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/the-underlying-structure-of-continuous-change/>

- Levine, A. (1997). Higher education's new status as a mature industry. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Higher-Educations-New-Status/76222/>
- Malone, P. (2003). Institutional effectiveness practices in colleges and universities in the southeastern United States. Retrieved from <http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/etd/2763/>
- Marginson, S. (2007). The public / private divide in higher education: A global revision. *Higher Education*, 53(3), 307-333. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29735057>
- McLendon, M. K., Hearn, J. C., & Deaton, R. (2006). Called to account: Analyzing the origins and spread of state performance-accountability policies for higher education. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 28 (1): 1-24.
- Mercer Delta Consulting (2004). The congruence model: A roadmap for understanding organizational performance; Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/9803697/The_Congruence_Model_A_Roadmap_for_Understanding_Organizational_Performance
- Meyer, A. D., Brooks, G. R., & Goes, J. B. (1990). Environmental jolts and industry revolutions: Organizational responses to discontinuous change. *Strategic Management Journal*, 11(Special Summer Issue-Corporate Entrepreneurship): 93-110.
- Middaugh, M. F. (2010). *Planning and assessment in higher education: Demonstrating institutional effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, J. A. (2012). *Management and organizational theory*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Morphew, C. & Toma, J. D. (2005). What future faculty need to know about administrative culture. Retrieved from <http://grad.uga.edu>
- National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. A report to the nation and the secretary of education*. Washington: U.S. Department of Education.
- National Institute of Education (1984). *Involvement in learning: Realizing the potential of American higher education. Final report of the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher*. Washington: U.S. Department of Education.
- Nichols, J. O. (1989). *Institutional effectiveness and outcomes assessment implementation on campus*. New York: Agatha Press.
- Noble, C. (1999). The eclectic roots of strategy implementation research. *Journal of Business Research*, 45(2), 119-135.

- Oliver, C. (1992). The antecedents of deinstitutionalization. *Organization Studies*. Sage Publications Inc. 1992. Retrieved from HighBeam Research at <https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-13832728.html>
- Olssen, M., & Peters, M. A. (2005). Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy: From the free market to knowledge capitalism. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20:3, 313-345. DOI: 10.1080/02680930500108718
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Paulsen, M. B. & Smart, J. C. (2001). *The finance of higher education: Theory, research, policy, and practice*. New York: Agathon Press. Retrieved from <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=37e18c4e-36df-415e-a697-e3143b470afc%40sessionmgr115&vid=1&hid=109&bdata=#db=nlebk&AN=66836>.
- Pfeffer, J. & Salancik, G. (1978). *The external control of organizations*. Harper & Row, New York.
- Pusey, N. (1978). *American higher education 1945-1970. A personal report*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Porter, M. (1996). What is strategy? *Harvard Business Review*, (November/December): 61-78.
- Provezis, S. (2010). Regional accreditation and student learning outcomes: Mapping the territory. (NILOA Occasional Paper No. 6). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Rogers, B. H., & Gentemann, K. M. (1989). The value of institutional research in the assessment of educational effectiveness. *Research in Higher Education*, 30(3): 345–355.
- Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Rogers, J. T. (1986). The new criteria for accreditation. In C. Fincher, L. G. Jones, & J. Placek (Eds.), *Higher education in Georgia: Assessment, evaluation, and accreditation*. (Proceedings of the conference, Athens, GA, January 15-16, 1986).
- Ruben, B., Immordino, K., & Tromp, S. (2009). Applying business insight and strategy within the academy: An idea whose time has come. In Knapp, J. and Siegel, D. (Ed). *The Business of Higher Education* (2). *Management and fiscal strategies*.
- Schloss, P. J., & Cragg, K. M. (2013). *Organization and administration in higher education*. New York: Routledge.
- Schmidtlein, F. (1985). Changing governance and management strategies. *New Directions in Institutional Research: Institutional Research in Transition*.

- Sherr, L. A., & Lozier, G. (1991). Total quality management in higher education. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, Fall 1991(71): 3-11. Retrieved from DOI: 10.1002/ir.37019917103
- Shupe, D. A. (1999). Productivity, quality, and accountability in higher education. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 47:1 (Winter): 2-13.
- Sibolski, E. H. (2012). What's an accrediting agency supposed to do? Institutional quality and improvement vs. regulatory compliance. *SCUP* (April-June): 22-28.
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2015). Data table retrieved from <http://www.sacscoc.org>.
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2014). Data table retrieved from <http://www.sacscoc.org>.
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2013). Data table retrieved from <http://www.sacscoc.org>.
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2012). The principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement. Decatur.
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2010). Data tables presented at the SACSCOC Summer Assessment Institute. Decatur.
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2009). Data tables presented at the SACSCOC Summer Assessment Institute. Decatur.
- Smart, J. C., & St. John, E. P. (1989). Organizational culture and effectiveness in higher education: A test of the "culture type" and "strong culture" hypotheses. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 18 (fall): 219-241. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1164261>
- Swing, R. L., & Coogan, C. S. (2010, May). Valuing assessment: Cost-benefit considerations (NILOA Occasional Paper No.5). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Taylor, J. (2015). The evolution of institutional research: Maturity models of institutional research and decision support and possible directions for the future. In Webber, K. L. & Calderon, A. (Eds.), *Institutional research and planning in higher education: Global themes and contexts*. New York: Routledge Press/Taylor & Francis.
- Thelin, J. R. (2004). *A history of american higher education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.

- Toma, J. D. (2006). Positioning for prestige in higher education: Case studies of aspirations and strategies at four public institutions toward "getting to the next level". Monograph by Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance. Houston.
- Toma, J. D (2010). *Building organizational capacity: Strategic management in higher education*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2012). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2012* (NCES 2012-001). Washington, DC: Author.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2006). *A test of leadership: Charting the future of american higher education*. Report of the Commission Appointed by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. Washington, DC: Author.
- U.S. Department of Education, Federal Register (1987, September 8). *Secretary's procedures and criteria for recognition of accrediting agencies*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Van de Ven, A. (1995). Explaining development and change in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3): 510-540.
- Volkwein, J. F., Liu, Y, & Woodell, J. (2012). The structure and function of institutional research offices. In R.D. Howard, G.W. McLaughlin, and W.E. Knight (Eds.), *The handbook of institutional research* (pp. 22-39). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Volkwein, J. F. (2011). Gaining ground: The role of institutional research in assessing student outcomes and demonstrating institutional effectiveness. (NILOA Occasional Paper No. 11). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research. Design and methods*. (5th Edition). Washington, DC: SAGE Publications.
- Waterman, R. H., Peters, T. J., & Phillips, J. R. (1980). Structure is not organization. *Business Horizons* 23(3): 14-26.
- Webber, K. L. & Calderon, A. (Eds.) (2015). *Institutional research and planning in higher education: Global themes and contexts*. New York: Routledge Press/Taylor & Francis.
- Webber, K.L. (2011). Measures of faculty productivity. In J. Shin, R. Toutkoushian, & U. Teichler (Eds.), *University rankings: Theoretical basis, methodology and impacts on global higher education*. New York: Springer Press.
- Zis, S., Boeke, M., & Ewell, P. T. (2010). State policies on the assessment of student learning outcomes: results of a fifty-state inventory. National Center for Higher Education Management Systems: Boulder.

Zucker, L. (1987). Institutional theories of organizations. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 13: 443-64.

APPENDIX C

RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Initial Institutional Contact E-mail

«Professional Degree or Title if any» «First Name» «Last Name»: It was my pleasure to speak with you by phone this morning regarding my research study, and I'm excited that <institution name> is interested in possibly participating. Here are some related items that you might find of interest.

The research study focuses on organizational capacity building, a strategic management concept, and applies a research lens to capacity building in Institutional Effectiveness (SACSCOC Standard 3.3.1). Institutions that have previously struggled with Standard 3.3.1 have been sought for this study. It is expected that insight provided through site interviews at participating institutions will provide operational and strategic guidance to similar institutions.

An IRB form for this study will be submitted to UGA by next Tuesday (1/21/14) and reviewed soon thereafter. Site interviews will be coordinated at the convenience of the host institution, and can only occur after the UGA IRB has approved the study. I am tentatively planning site visits for late February, 2014 through March, 2014. Site visits would be one-day visits to each institution, and campus IE stakeholders would be invited to participate in one-on-one interviews.

All participating institutions will have access to site interview questions (before the campus visit) and to transcripts for their institutions following the campus visit and prior to dissertation submission to UGA if requested. Site visit questions will be posed to campus stakeholders in Institutional Effectiveness, and will include a variety of questions ranging from 'What is your current role...' to 'How did your institution respond to SACSCOC recommendations in Standard 3.3.1', etc. I plan to forward you an updated question list in the next week or so.

Here is the organizational capacity building model for higher education institutions authored by NACUBO (2005;

http://www.nacubo.org/Business_Officer_Magazine/Magazine_Archives/December_2005/Working_More_Effectively_by_Building_Organizational_Capacity.html) and Toma (2010).

Participant interview questions will be organized around the following organizational capacity building elements:

Purposes—why are we here and where are we headed?

Structures—how are we configured to do our work?

Governance—who makes what decisions?

Policies—what rules do we proceed under?

Processes—how do we get things done?

Information—what do we need to inform our decision making?

Infrastructure—what are our human, physical, technological, and financial assets?

Culture—what is the institution's essential character?

Again, thank you and others at <institution name> for your interest in this study. I look forward to working with you in the coming months, and will be in touch again with the next week.

Regards, John

Follow-up E-mail to Participant

Dear «Professional Title if any» «First Name» «Last Name»:

My name is John Cooper, and I am a doctoral student in Higher Education at the University of Georgia. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study entitled, “Organizational Capacity Building in Institutional Effectiveness.” The purpose of this study is to learn how institutions of higher education successfully plan, implement, and sustain their Institutional Effectiveness initiatives.

Your participation will involve being interviewed about your work and professional experiences. Your participation is voluntary, and there are no expected risks to your involvement. I will ask your permission to record the interview, but you may choose not to be recorded and yet still participate.

I am anticipating a day visit to your institution on «date», and would like to schedule an hour to meet with you. You and other Institutional Effectiveness stakeholders noted in your institution’s directory have been invited to participate in this study, and I understand that you are busy and that your responsibilities may limit your availability. If you agree to participate, please respond to this email or call me at (404) 290-5119 to set up a time and campus location to meet.

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me at 404-290-5119 or jcooper@uga.edu. You may also choose to contact Dr. Karen Webber, my dissertation chair, at 706-542-6831 or kwebber@uga.edu. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, 629 Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602, or at 706-542-3199 or irb@uga.edu.

I look forward to visiting your campus and to meeting you soon, and thank you for your support of my research interests and activities.

Sincerely,

John Cooper
PhD Candidate
Institute of Higher Education
The University of Georgia Athens, GA 30602
Cell Phone: (404) 290-5119
Email: jcooper@uga.edu

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Researcher's Statement

I am requesting that you take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called “informed consent.” A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator: *Dr. Karen Webber*
 The University of Georgia, Institute of Higher Education
 kwebber@uga.edu; 706-542-6831

Purpose of the Study

This study is a multi-case study of three higher education institutions. In-person interviews will explore the context of and details on how institutions responded to accreditation recommendations and non-compliance following a recent institutional accreditation. Institutions will be accredited by the same regional accreditor, and will be of similar institutional type (type designated by the accreditation body). Data on different institutional roles and activities will be collected through in-person interviews of 5-7 Institutional Effectiveness stakeholders per institution. Responses gathered during interviews at participating institutions will be compared using qualitative methods that include content analysis and pattern matching.

Findings are intended to provide practical guidance to institutions struggling with Institutional Effectiveness. It is also expected that findings will expand the existing literature, and offer practical and transferable insight on planning, implementing, and sustaining a variety of institutional initiatives.

You have been asked to participate in this study because of your role(s) in managing, operationalizing, and/or reporting on Institutional Effectiveness at your institution, and because your institution has successfully demonstrated capacity in SACSCOC Standard 3.3.1. (Institutional Effectiveness).

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a one-hour in-person interview answering questions about your institutional role, your institution's recent reaccreditation review, and institutional activities in capacity building for Institutional Effectiveness. Follow up email(s) may also be involved to ensure that information obtained in the interview is understood and accurate.
- There will be approximately two contacts with each interviewee – one in-person interview that will last approximately one hour, and a follow-up email(s) to double-check for accuracy.

The total duration of participation will be 1½ - 3 hours depending on the amount of follow-up necessary.

- Interviews will be audio-recorded and then transcribed for analysis.
- All data will be kept secure and then destroyed after two years – electronic files deleted, paper files shredded.

Risks and discomforts

- Potential risks and/or discomforts associated with this study are minimal. If any interviewee reveals sensitive information related to the institution's accreditation or compliance, then inadvertent release of that information to the public could contain risk for both the interviewee and/or others associated with the project.
- To minimize this risk, data collected from interviews will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose intended. Consent will be requested to enter the case study.

Interview quotes

At no time will you be able to be identified in any reports or publications that result from this research without your consent. However, please provide initials below if you are willing to have any direct quotes from your interview used in project reports. Unless you also initial the line asking for your name to be attached to quotes, your quotes will be attributed anonymously. You may participate in this study even if you prefer to not have any quotes used in project reports.

_____ I do not want any aspect of this interview directly quoted in project reports.

_____ I am willing to have parts of this interview quoted in project reports.

_____ I prefer to have my name attributed to any associated quotes used in project reports.

You will be given an opportunity to review the section of our report in which your quotes may appear before completion of our research. We will immediately honor any request to remove quotes from our research reports at any time before final completion of the project.

Benefits

- Study participants may gain additional understanding of organizational capacity building concepts and activities, but direct benefits to study participants are expected to be minimal.
- Information learned about organizational capacity building both in theory and as a strategic tool may assist institutions in the current Institutional Effectiveness activities, as well as in other campus initiatives including the Quality Enhancement Plan which is another critical SACSCOC accreditation requirement.

Incentives for participation

No incentives will be used for participation in the study.

Audio/Video Recording

Audio tapes will be made of each interview, and then transcribed. This will assist in the data analysis stage. Audio tapes and transcripts will be destroyed after a two-year period.

Please provide initials below if you agree to have this interview audio recorded or not. You may still participate in this study even if you are not willing to have the interview recorded.

_____ I do not want to have this interview recorded.

_____ I am willing to have this interview recorded.

Privacy/Confidentiality

Data collected from you will include information that identifies you directly (e.g., name, e-mail address). The only researchers who will have access to this data are Dr. Karen Webber and Mr. John Cooper. Data will be stored in computer files secured with encryption, and in locked filing cabinets.

The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

Taking part is voluntary

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

If you have questions

The main researcher conducting this study is Dr. Karen Webber, a professor at the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education. Dr. Webber can be contacted at kwebber@uga.edu or 706-542-6831. Assisting in this research is Mr. John Cooper, a doctoral student with the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education. Mr. Cooper can be contacted at jcooper@uga.edu or 404-290-5119. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706-542-3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered.

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

APPENDIX E

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS, CONCEPTUAL FRAME, DATA SOURCES,
AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Research Question	Conceptual Frame	Data Sources	Interview Questions
<i>1. Are leaders in higher education institutions using organizational capacity building as a framework to support their campus initiatives related to accreditation? If so, how is this being accomplished?</i>			
What are the primary roles, activities, and structures that support your current Institutional Effectiveness initiative?	<p>Drivers / forces of change related to accreditation</p> <p>Organizational elements</p> <p>Organizational design</p>	<p>Interviews</p> <p>Artifacts</p> <p>Documents</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about your current position and your experiences in Institutional Effectiveness. 2. How was Institutional Effectiveness introduced to your institution? How was it initially received by various stakeholders? How well is it understood and supported currently? 3. What actions were taken by the institution to respond to SACSCOC recommendations? 4. What activities were/are involved in planning and implementing Institutional Effectiveness at your institution? 5. Who provided early leadership, vision, and guidance for this initiative? What other campus leaders were involved in capacity building? Who currently

			<p>directs your Institutional Effectiveness initiative?</p> <p>6. How is Institutional Effectiveness data gathered and then used to support various institutional functions? What technologies are used to gather data and report findings? Who are the consumers of this information?</p> <p>7. What campus stakeholders are involved in assessment and Institutional Effectiveness, and what are their roles?</p> <p>8. What resources were needed to support Institutional Effectiveness, and how were they obtained? What recurring resources are needed to sustain your institution's initiative?</p> <p>9. During recent reaccreditation cycles, what challenges related to assessment were identified by reviewers?</p>
<i>2. In these initiatives, do organizational capacity building elements interact? If so, how?</i>			
What connections exist among organizational elements in the context of Institutional Effectiveness?	Organizational fit	Interviews	<p>1. How does your institution evaluate the success of its Institutional Effectiveness initiative (excluding SACSCOC compliance)?</p> <p>2. What unique organizational elements or features defines your institution's success in its campus initiative?</p>

			3. How does your institution identify gaps or deficiencies within or between organizational elements?
<i>3. Are these initiatives sustainable, and if so, how is this being accomplished?</i>			
<p>What are perceived threats to sustaining your current Institutional Effectiveness initiative?</p> <p>What strategies does your institution employ to ensure sustainability of its current Institutional Effectiveness initiative?</p>	Sustainability	Interviews	<p>1. What developments or conditions threaten Institutional Effectiveness at your institution? What strategies have been discussed to respond to threats?</p> <p>2. How might the institution accommodate accreditation changes related to Institutional Effectiveness?</p> <p>3. What institutional activities or changes do you think were not critical--yet still important--in responding to accreditation recommendations in Institutional Effectiveness?</p> <p>4. Has Institutional Effectiveness been institutionalized at your university? If so, how do you know that this has occurred?</p>

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant Interviews

Each study participants will meet with the interviewer for one 60-minute interview session. Participants may also be contacted for brief follow-up conversations via e-mail or phone to gather additional information or to gain clarity on

Consent Process

At the beginning of each interview, the interviewer will explain the interview process and answer questions about the research study. The interviewer will then request verbal permission to record the conversation. Participants will then be asked to sign two copies of the Consent Form.

Common Questions

1. How was Institutional Effectiveness introduced to the university, and how was it received by various stakeholders? How well is it understood and supported currently?
2. What activities were involved in planning and implementing Institutional Effectiveness at your institution?
3. Who provided early leadership and support for this initiative, and what informed their activities? Who leads Institutional Effectiveness now?
4. What developments or conditions threaten Institutional Effectiveness at your institution? What strategies have been discussed to respond to threats?
5. Why is IE so successful at your university?

Participant-specific Questions

1. Tell me about your current position and your experiences in Institutional Effectiveness.